EVANGELICALISM AND THE NEW CITY: A HISTORY OF THE CITY MISSION MOVEMENT IN NEW YORK, 1812 TO 1870

CARROLL SMITH ROSENBERG

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ABSTRACT

EVANGELICALISM AND THE NEW CITY:

A HISTORY OF THE CITY MISSION MOVEMENT IN NEW YORK, 1812 TO 1870

Carroll S. Rosenberg

1968

By the closing decades of the nineteenth-century, thoughtful Americans had become aware of the problems which urbanization, industrialization, and immigration had brought to their country. Few historians today would question this. The roots of concern for the poor and especially the urban poor, however, extend well back into the decades before the Civil War. By the late 1820's and early 1830's, America's eastern cities had already begun to attract the large scale immigration of alien groups. Slums and chronic underemployment preceded immigration; and societies to feed, clothe, and employ the urban poor antedated the nineteenth century.

This thesis attempts to trace the development of one kind of attempt to ameliorate the misery of America's slums -- the city mission. It follows the development of this institution from the opening years of the century through the 1860's.

The nineteenth century city mission was an organized effort by the pious and respectable to disseminate the truths of revealed religion and the hope of eternal salvation among a city's unchurched and deprived. The scope and methods of these pious associations changed, however, in a number of significant ways during the first half of the century.

The history of the missions divides itself into three relatively dis-

tinct phases. First, a period at the beginning of the century when pious New Yorkers attempted to aid the indigent and disadvantaged in essentially traditional and material ways. (Though religion always played an important role in motivating and shaping these benevolent societies, their efforts were limited both in scope and aims.) Second, a period of millennial revivalism in the late 1820's and 1830's in which the first true city missions were founded, and in which zealous New Yorkers sought the conversion of all their fellow citizens -- the poor among them. The role of Charles G. Finney and a gradually dominant activism in theology played an important role in these decades. A third period in the mission's history came following the Panic of 1837; increasing and finally exclusive emphasis was placed upon pragmatic meliorism, decreasing emphasis upon the means of conversion, the tracts, visiting, and prayer meetings which had so characterized the work of the missions in their revivalistic period. Mission spokesmen and workers now turned to such matters as public health reform, industrial education, and the rationalization of social welfare efforts. Not surprisingly, the missions turned as well from their initial dependence upon pious volunteers to reliance upon full-time, often salaried workers.

Since much of the evolution of the missions is seen in terms of responses to growing urban problems, a number of chapters are devoted to a discussion of New York as a city, its size and physical aspects, something of its class structure, its slums and their inhabitants as well as the middle class in their more comfortable homes. The study is divided into two sections corresponding to demonstrably different phases in the growth of the nineteenth century city. The first section covers the years between the War of 1812 and the mid-1830's, the second from the Panic of 1837 through the Civil War. Each section contains a sketch of the city, of particular city missions, and of the evolving patterns of thought and action adopted by their workers and supporters.

MAP
of the
CITY OF NEW-YORK

Drawn by D.H. Burr,
expressly for
"New York as it is."

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BROOKLYN

EAST RIVER

NORTH RIVER

NEW YORK BAY

Navy Yard

Castle Garden

Battery

City Hall

Bellevue

Washington Square

Tompkins Square

Union Square

Hamilton Square

Jersey City

Hoboken

Ferry to Brooklyn

Ferry to Hoboken

Ferry to Jersey City

Ferry to Staten Island

Steam Boats to Albany

Steam Boats to Philadelphia

Steam Boats to Newark

Steam Boats to Hartford and Providence

Steam Boats to Boston

Steam Boats to New Haven

Steam Boats to Bridgeport

Steam Boats to Norwalk

Steam Boats to Fishkill

Steam Boats to Poughkeepsie

Steam Boats to Newburgh

Steam Boats to Albany

Steam Boats to Troy

Steam Boats to Hudson

Steam Boats to Catskill

Steam Boats to Coxsackie

Steam Boats to Athens

Steam Boats to Kingston

Steam Boats to Rondout

Steam Boats to Saugerties

Steam Boats to Esopus

Steam Boats to Albany

Steam Boats to Troy

Steam Boats to Hudson

Steam Boats to Catskill

Steam Boats to Coxsackie

Steam Boats to Athens

Steam Boats to Kingston

Steam Boats to Rondout

Steam Boats to Saugerties

Steam Boats to Esopus

To Leah and Her Father

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INTRODUCTION

To that minority of mid-twentieth-century Americans aware of city missions, the term seems a vague and unfamiliar one; at best it suggests the memory of skid row visits and the sound of Salvation Army tambourines. City missions seem amusingly wistful attempts to convert that dubious object of salvation, the Bowery derelict. Yet this is a later and highly specialized form of city mission. Throughout the nineteenth century, this institution played a far more central role, clarifying the understanding and sharpening the conscience of Americans in relation to urban poverty.

By the closing decades of the nineteenth century, thoughtful Americans had become aware of the problems which urbanization, industrialization, and immigration had brought to their country. Few historians today would question this, and indeed the study of urban reform and philanthropy in post-bellum America has become a well-established field. The roots of concern for the poor and especially the urban poor, however, extend well back into the decades before the Civil War. By the late 1820's and early 1830's, America's

eastern cities had already begun to attract the large-scale immigration of alien groups. Slums and chronic underemployment preceded immigration; and societies to feed, clothe, and employ the urban poor antedated the nineteenth century. By the 1840's, respectable, church-going Americans had founded a host of industrial training schools, orphanages, free medical dispensaries, and city missions. The public health movement dates, in essence, from this decade, as do the first plans for model tenements. To understand urban poverty and American response to this need, one must begin one's studies well before the Civil War.

It is my hope in the following pages to trace the development of one kind of attempt to ameliorate the misery of America's slums--the city mission. We will follow the development of this institution from the opening years of the century through the 1860's.

What precisely is a city mission? It meant, in the nineteenth century, an organized effort by the pious and respectable to disseminate the truths of revealed religion and the hope of eternal salvation among a city's unchurched and deprived. As the following pages will demonstrate, however, the scope and methods of these pious associations changed in a number of significant ways during the first half of the century.

To trace the institutional origins of New York's city missions, one must begin with the closing years of the

eighteenth century. Beginning during the late 1780's and 1790's, concerned New Yorkers had founded a number of public and private institutions for the care of the dependent and indigent. The New York Society for the Protection of Poor Widows with Small Children, for example, the Humane Society, and the Society for the Prevention of Pauperism were all established during these years. Other societies provided education and medical care for the poor. By 1815, philanthropic New Yorkers had over a quarter of a century's experience with urban poverty.

These early organizations sought--essentially--to care for the immediate material needs of the poor. And one is naturally tempted to think of them as secular charities and the period that produced them as a secular one. But this is hardly an accurate description of New York society during the 1790's and early 1800's; it misrepresents, as well, the underlying motivations of those founding these organizations. Such early philanthropists--Isabella Graham, John Griscom, Ezra Stiles Ely and John Stanford, to name several of the more prominent--were, though differing in denominational allegiance, pious Christians who saw the world in deeply religious terms. They fed and clothed the poor, nursed the sick, and educated the ignorant in response to Christ's admonitions that all true Christians care for their less fortunate brothers. And when they distributed food and clothing or attended the ill, they attempted to inculcate Christian truths--even to the most hardened unbelievers.

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Many of these organizations continued to care for the urban poor far into the nineteenth century. But despite some overlap in leadership, it is not really to these societies that we can trace the far more active and long-lived city missions founded in the 1820's and 1830's. A factor other than awareness of urban poverty and the influence of traditional pietism spurred the formation of the first city missions. This was an increasingly pervasive evangelical upsurge beginning in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century, a movement often referred to as the Second Great Awakening.

Increasingly during the first third of the nineteenth century, a spirit of religious enthusiasm invaded most Protestant denominations. Church-goers became urgently concerned with the salvation of their own souls and committed to the responsibility of helping save those of their neighbors. Foreign and domestic missions burgeoned during these years as did Sunday school unions, and Bible and tract distributing organizations. Some Americans began gradually to feel that through prayer and missionary exertion they might save all men and bring the millennium. This revival of religion is often associated with the name and work of Charles Grandison Finney, whose career in the late 1820's and 1830's seemed to crystallize and intensify this growing pietism.

New York's first true city missions were a product of this religious enthusiasm. They were organized to spread

religion and salvation among all New Yorkers. The New York City Tract Society, for example, New York's first city mission, was founded as an auxiliary of the American Tract Society, its goal to distribute religious tracts and the word of God throughout New York City. The American Female Guardian Society, another of New York's early city missions, was founded by a group of Charles G. Finney's closest disciples in order to convert New York's prostitutes to evangelical Protestantism and to purify the morality of all Americans. Both organizations anticipated the imminent arrival of Christ and the commencement of the millennial age--a culmination made possible, in part, by their missionary efforts.

Gradually, however, the general cooling of pietistic enthusiasm within American Protestantism, internal stress within the city missions themselves, and the pressure of an implacable urban environment narrowed the perspective and goals of these mission organizations; by the 1840's and 1850's, they had largely reformulated their objectives. They sought now to work exclusively among the urban poor. This decision to limit their religious labors to one particular class in society soon involved the city missions in an increasingly pragmatic--and in this sense perhaps materialistic--program of social meliorism among the city's slum population.

Yet to these new, increasingly pragmatic, concerns, the city missions continued to bring the enthusiasm and zeal of their original religious commitment. And indeed

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the missions never discarded religious goals. Their ultimate aim was always the conversion of the individual soul. But where in 1830 they had expected to convert all through prayer and the distribution of tracts, they sought in the 1860's to convert the urban poor through prayer--but prayer abetted by tenement house reform, industrial training, and job placement. Thus the evolution of the city mission from a by-product of millennial enthusiasm into a forerunner of the settlement house and pragmatic social service generally.

The city, as well as religion, had clearly helped shape this evolution. American cities had changed drastically between the presidency of John Adams and that of Abraham Lincoln. It was in large part as a direct response to the problems of urban growth--slums, poverty, disease, crime, and immigration--and because they had already familiarized themselves with the poor and the city that the mission leaders adopted their new melioristic programs. City mission workers and directors had come to feel that before they could convert the poor, their missionaries must first win their confidence and alleviate temporal needs so pressing as to make religion unimportant. Industrial schools, job training and placement, systematic outdoor relief, better housing and public health programs came to replace Sunday schools and Bible distribution as the principal activities of the city mission. Professional charity workers

took the place of pietistic volunteers bent on the conversion of neighbors and servants. By the 1850's and 1860's, the city missions had become a focus of middle-class interest in the problems of immigration, unemployment, urban housing, and crime prevention. The missions' employees had at the same time found a place among the nation's leading experts on these subjects.

In general, then, I submit that the history of the missions divides itself into three relatively distinct phases. First, a period at the beginning of the century when pious New Yorkers attempted to aid the indigent and disadvantaged of the city in essentially traditional and material ways. Second, a period of millennial revivalism in the late 1820's and 1830's in which the first true city missions were founded, and in which zealous New Yorkers sought the conversion of all their fellow citizens--the poor among them. A third period in the mission's history came following the Panic of 1837 in which increasing and finally exclusive emphasis was placed upon work with one class alone, the poor.* In parallel fashion, increasing emphasis came to be placed upon pragmatic meliorism, decreasing emphasis upon the means of conversion, the tracts, visiting,

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*Though it is difficult to define precisely, the 1839-1843 depression played a crucial role in reshaping the mission leaders' attitude towards the city and poverty. It must be recalled that the severity of this depression was comparable to that which affected Americans ninety years later.

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and prayer meetings which had so characterized the work of the missions in their revivalistic period.

Since much of the evolution of the city missions will be seen in terms of responses to growing urban problems, I have chosen to devote the opening chapters to a discussion of New York, its size, something of its class structure, its slums and their inhabitants as well as the middle class in their more comfortable homes. When did poverty become a "visible" social problem? When did increasing size begin to obscure prosperous New Yorkers' understanding of their own city? But while social problems were central in the establishment of the city missions, it was the ideas and assumptions of their founders which shaped the specific form assumed by particular missions and determined their special aims and methods. I have, therefore, followed my description of New York with an analysis of what seemed to be the controlling ideas motivating the mission's founders especially in the area of religion and theology, class relations and what the mid-nineteenth century called "political economy." When did conservative Calvinists espouse the evangelical and increasingly millennial zeal of the Second Great Awakening? When did the "cleanliness" of public health begin to find an unquestioned place beside the traditionally pietistic "godliness" in the values of the middle class? It is only against this background of city and ideas that we can appropriately begin an institutional history of New York's pre-bellum missions.

I have divided this study in half, into two sections corresponding, I felt, to demonstrably different phases in the growth of the nineteenth century city. The first section covers the years between the War of 1812 and the mid-1830's, the second from the Panic of 1837 through the Civil War. Each section contains a sketch of the city, of particular city missions, and of the evolving patterns of thought and action adapted by their workers and supporters.

The success of such an analysis rests necessarily upon depth and unity of focus. To secure this I have limited the study to one city. Institutional change is often quiet, and such subtle shifts can be detected only by studying a few institutions in relative detail. Though there were a great many missions or mission-like efforts in pre-bellum New York, I have chosen to describe only the largest and most influential--and for which the most adequate records are available. A comparative study of a large number of missions in different cities would have had certain advantages, but, I feel, correspondingly great disadvantages. Other reasons dictated this decision as well. One was the great number of city missions established by New Yorkers and the relative novelty of such missions as a research field. And New York, of course, was America's largest and most important city, one which foreshadowed the trends other American cities were to follow. New York as America's largest city, as the receiving point for so large a portion of the country's immigration, was naturally

the city with the most dramatic social problems: slums, crime, unemployment and high mortality rates. In New York, the problems of other urban communities were intensified and magnified. This, at least, was the opinion of contemporaries. New York, even in the third and fourth decades of the century, had already become a symbol of wealth and elegance, but also of poverty, crime and sin. Philadelphians, Bostonians, residents of the newer western cities, looked to and copied New York's social experiments. And this was true of city missions as it was of other institutions.

PART I. NEW YORK, HER PIOUS AND HER POOR, 1812-1837

CHAPTER I

Today's visitor to New York City frequently arrives by air, settling into the noisy confusion of the city's major airports, or by automobile, on a complex of superhighways which increasingly invades the city's confines and imposes itself upon streets and avenues. Avoiding New York's waterfront of dilapidated warehouses and menacing slums, the mid-twentieth century visitor settles into a routine of shopping or business at the island's center. Seldom does he even see the city's two great rivers or realize that he is visiting one of the world's greatest ports and North America's finest harbor.

The city deceives its visitors. Over the decades and the centuries its merchants, artisans, mechanics and shopkeepers have moved away from the waterfront and created an inner city--seemingly divorced from the ships, independent of the harbor. New York today seems a city of advertising agencies, office skyscrapers and apartment houses.

The visitor one hundred fifty years ago saw a far different city. He saw a city of wharves and packet ships, of wood and brick houses crowded into a spit of land which

divided New York harbor in two. He saw New York City as a provincial port, a city comparable perhaps to Bristol, but not to London.

In part this earlier view was determined by the traveler's method of arrival. He came almost always by ship--if from New England, past the rocks and whirlpools of Hell's Gate, if from the south or Europe, along the sand spits of New Jersey and Long Island, past the Narrows and into the broad basin of the upper bay. In either case, New York appeared to float towards him, surrounded by the masts and rigging of the scores of ships which filled its harbor and crowded its twin rivers. Wharves and slips distorted the island's shore line; its ship yards jutted far into the river towards the twin villages of Brooklyn and Williamsburg. Behind this shield of sails and wood a small red brick and wooden city crowded towards the shore line, held in and softened by the nearby woodlands and farms of New Jersey and the heavily forested upper reaches of Manhattan Island.[1]

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[1]There are many accounts of travel to New York City covering the years, roughly, 1790 to 1820. Many of them present the visitor's first view of New York. These include, among others: Frances D'Arusmont /Wright/, Views of Society and Manners in America: in a Series of Letters from that Country to a Friend in England during the Years 1818, 1819, and 1820 (New York, 1821), pp. 7-11; Timothy Dwight, Travels: in New England and New-York (4 vols.; New Haven, 1821-1822), III, 449, 481, 483; John Duncan, Travels through Part of the United States and Canada in 1818 and 1819 (2 vols.; New York, 1823), I, 26-27; John Melish, Travels in the United States of America in the Years 1806 and 1807, and 1809, 1810, and 1811 (Philadelphia,

Commerce was New York's raison d'etre. Save for its magnificent harbor, the city possessed few natural resources. Its soil, sandy and thin, had never encouraged farming. Nor at first did manufacturing thrive, for the island boasted few streams and its rivers afforded little readily harnessable energy.[2] But its rivers connected the city with New York State's vast interior and with the sheltered shore line of lower New England. Its bay was deep, wide, freed from ice by the interaction of its two powerful tides, and sheltered by the Narrows from ocean storms.[3]

If our visitor arrived at New York harbor immediately after the peace of 1815, he witnessed a period of remarkable commercial activity. No sooner had peace been announced,

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1818), pp. 57-61; John Palmer, Journal of Travels in the United States of North America and in Lower Canada, Performed in the Year 1817 (London, 1818), pp. 3, 174, 293. Fortunately many descriptive prints of New York dating from these years have been preserved. The most striking are reprinted in I. N. Phelps Stokes, Iconography of Manhattan Island (6 vols.; New York, 1915-1928). Cf. III, plates 84, 89, 92, 93 and 117.

[2]Horatio Gates Spafford, A Gazeteer of the State of New York (Albany, 1824), p. 85; Edwin Williams, New-York as It Is in 1833; and Citizens Advertising Directory Containing a General Description of the City and Environs, List of Officers, Public Institutions, and other Useful Information, for the Convenience of Citizens, as a Book of Reference, and a Guide to Strangers. With a Correct Map of the City (New York, 1833), pp. 11, 159, 248-249; Edmund M. Blunt, The Strangers Guide to the City of New-York (London, 1818), pp. 161-162; Benson J. Lossing, A History of New York City (2 vols.; New York, 1884), I, 224.

[3]Undoubtedly the best modern discussion of New York harbor and New York's commercial development are still those by Robert Greenhalgh Albion: The Rise of New York Port (New York, 1939) and Square-Riggers on Schedule (Princeton, 1938).

the cold night of February 11, 1815, than the merchantmen lying in drydock were cleaned and refitted, crews reassembled and new ships scheduled for construction. By the time the news of Waterloo and a secure European peace reached the city in August, New York merchants had already sent a dozen ships to Europe and had reestablished their trade with India, China and the West Indies. New York shipowners and jobbers dominated the coastal trade as well, drawing lower Connecticut and Long Island into the city's commercial orbit. At the same time, the city's merchants increased their role in the marketing of Southern cotton and tobacco. As New Yorkers sought to regain prewar commercial prosperity and to open new trade routes, British merchants independently decided to use New York as the principal American port for dumping their accumulated stocks of textiles on the American market. By the end of the decade, with construction of the Erie Canal well under way and regular packet service established between New York and Liverpool, New York had become the entrepot of North America, the nation's unchallenged commercial center.[4]

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[4]Albion discusses the relationship of the varied economic and geographic factors which led to New York's commercial preeminence in Rise of New York Port, Chaps. I-IX. A recent, useful, and brief description of New York's economy during this period is found in David M. Ellis et al., A Short History of New York State (Ithaca, New York, 1957), pp. 174-179, 258-259, 269-270. It is interesting as well to look at contemporary discussions of New York commerce, if only to get a sense of the mercantile community's buoyant optimism and its aggressive nationalism. A good example is [John A. Dix], A Sketch of the Resources of New York City (New York, 1827).

To her visitors in the years that followed 1815, New York presented a picture of unbounded energy and prosperity. Her warehouses were full, her auction rooms crowded. Cartmen and stevedores jostled each other for room along Front and Water streets. Throughout the city, tall brick buildings rapidly replaced the clapboard houses of colonial times, and the Battery, Greenwich Street, Park Place and Hudson Square, where Rensselaers and Schermerhorns lived, reminded many of the fashionable streets of London's West End. Yet everywhere, it seemed to both natives and visitors, noise and confusion reigned. Rubble, bricks and lumber--of old houses just demolished, for houses being constructed--blocked streets and sidewalks. Dust and dirt filled the air.[5]

Such congestion most New Yorkers simply accepted, or pointed to with pride. Each packing crate was evidence of their city's commercial eminence. But nuisances existed which few New Yorkers could excuse. The carcasses of dead animals, the manure of cattle and horses littered the streets, mingled with the ashes and dirt which householders casually threw in front of their homes. Notoriously inefficient private companies collected this filth,

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[5]Dwight, Travels, III, 470. Melish, Travels, I, 57; W. Winterbotham, An Historical, Geographical, Commercial, and Philosophical View of the American United States and of the European Settlements in America and the West Indies (2 vols.; London, 1795), II, 314; Duncan, Travels, pp. 27-28; Spafford, Gazeteer, p. 347; Palmer, Journal, pp. 6, 175, 293-334.

assisted by the countless hogs and dogs who subsisted on the city's offal and garbage. Sewage disposal and water supply received equally casual treatment. Landowners collected their night soil in shallow holes in their backyards. Common sewers were unknown.[6] The wealthy bought their water in casks from New Jersey or Westchester, or collected rainwater in cisterns on their roofs. The poor used street wells, sunk into the island's shallow water table and frequently polluted or brackish.[7] Far into the century, New York had no police, fire, sanitation, or sewage departments. A private charitable organization ran her common schools. She possessed one hospital, and her almshouse cared for the insane, imprisoned debtors, and the senile, as well as the city's unemployables and vagrants.[8]

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[6]European visitors were acid in their criticism of the filth in New York streets. Many were amazed as well at the city's practice of permitting hogs to run loose, rooting in garbage. See, for example, William N. Blaine, An Excursion through the United States and Canada during the Years 1822-1823. By an English Gentleman (London, 1824), pp. 11-12; Palmer, Journal, III, 564; Duncan, Travels, p. 27. Native New Yorkers also criticized their city's sanitary facilities. See, for example, New York Evening Post, July 18, 1817, and July 22, 1817.

[7]For a modern discussion of New York City's water problem, see Nelson Blake, Water for the Cities (Syracuse, New York, 1956), Chaps. 3, 6 and 8. For official recognition of the problem, see New York City Common Council, Minutes of the Common Council, 1784-1831 (19 vols.; New York, 1917), XII, 309-311 (hereinafter referred to as M.C.C., 1784-1831).

[8]For discussions of the public and charitable institutions of early New York, cf.: Abram C. Dayton, Last Days of Knickerbocker Life in New York (New York, 1882); William O. Bourne, A History of the Public School Society of the City of New York (New York, 1870);

But these were merely the problems of any small town faced with sudden growth and prosperity; and New York City in 1812, or in 1830 for that matter, was still a provincial seaport, barely filling the southern tip of Manhattan Island. In 1800, the city could claim but 60,000 inhabitants, a number that increased by the War of 1812 to only 92,448.[9] Greenwich Village was a town some three miles north of the city limits, resorted to as a place of rural shelter in times of epidemic. Wooden farm buildings clustered around what would come to be the crowded intersection of Hester and Division Streets. Grand Street, just opened through the Livingston estate, was a dirt road patrolled by herds of cows and used by barefoot boys as a shortcut to their fishing hole. Until 1820, a country stream ran where the city's planners envisioned Canal Street, and but three blocks north of City Hall a fresh-water pond, the Collect, cut short the spread of population. To the west a large, undrained swamp, Lispenard's Meadows, discouraged builders;

David M. Schneider, A History of Public Welfare in New York State (2 vols.; Chicago, 1938), especially Vol. I, Chaps. VIII and IX; Lowell M. Limpus, History of the New York Fire Department (New York, 1940); Samuel L. Knapp, The Life of Thomas Eddy (New York, 1834); John H. Griscom, Memoir of John Griscom, LL.D., Late Professor of Chemistry and Natural Philosophy; With an Account of the New York High School; Society for the Prevention of Pauperism; the House of Refuge; and Other Institutions. Compiled from an Autobiography and Other Sources (New York, 1859).

[9]Williams, New-York, pp. 19, 65; M.C.C., 1784-1831, VII, 689; Spafford, Gazeteer, p. 246. Spafford, on p. 350, also breaks down the 1820 city population by trade and sex.

both Rivington and Hudson streets cut through marshland and swamp. As late as 1812, Third Avenue halted at North Street, and the construction of wooden buildings and burials in family plots were permitted throughout the city. Not until 1812 did the first ferry cross the Hudson connecting New York with New Jersey.[10]

Retail stores were few; groceries unknown. New Yorkers, rich and poor, bought their food at one of the city's six markets or from street hawkers. Indeed, much of New York's food was sold by these small entrepreneurs, who added appreciably to the noise and confusion of the city's streets. Oysters, clams, vegetables, hot muffins, ginger cakes and wild strawberries for the teas of the well-to-do were all secured in this fashion. The proximity of an untamed wilderness can be seen in the types of meat and fowl regularly offered in the city's markets: bear, deer, raccoon, and ground hog; wild goose, widgeon teal, broadbill duck, wild turkey, meadow hen and lark.

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[10]Robert Sutcliff, Travels in Some Parts of North America in the Years 1804, 1805, & 1806 (Philadelphia, 1812), p. 212; Williams, New-York, p. 19; M.C.C., 1784-1831, VII, 227-228, 458, XI, 515-518; Stokes, Iconography, III, 510; William A. Duer, Reminiscences of an Old New Yorker (New York, 1867), p. 13. [A. T. Goodrich], The Picture of New-York and Strangers' Guide to the Commercial Metropolis of the United States (New York, 1828), pp. 155-156, reported that as late as the opening years of the nineteenth century, nearly four hundred acres south of Canal Street had been swampland or "covered with water, which in some places was of very considerable depth . . . ."

Terrapin and green turtle appeared frequently in the markets' fish stalls.[11]

The city's government reflected the modest size of this provincial port and the comparative simplicity of its business arrangements. Public officials were few, their activities many. The average citizen had frequent contact with them, for the city's government was small and intimate. The mayor, as the city's chief executive, personally licensed New York's cartmen, cryers, scavengers, porters, and artisans generally. His salary was not a stated amount paid by the state legislature or the common council, but the sum of certain municipal license and court fees--subject, often, to bitter dispute with the common council.[12]

Throughout most of the early nineteenth century the corporation's government retained the colonial period's confusion of legislative, judicial and executive powers. The city's two chief executive officers, the mayor and the recorder, were ex-officio members of the legislative branch, which until 1831 met as a single-branch legislature. The mayor and the recorder also doubled as the city's principal judicial officers. Indeed it was not until 1821 that the

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[11]Spafford, Gazeteer, p. 251; Anonymous, The Cries of New-York (New York, 1808, facsimile, 1936); Isaac Holmes, An Account of the United States of America, Derived from Actual Observation, during a Residence of Four Years in that Republic (London, [1823]), pp. 266-268.

[12]Spafford, Gazeteer, pp. 247, 251-253; Williams, New-York, p. 36.

state established regular judgeships in the city. Nor until 1849 did the city possess regular departments to administer its executive affairs. The common council divided itself into committees to deal with such basic administrative matters as auditing accounts, regulating streets, repairing public buildings, poor relief, sanitation and public health. Nor did the city have a regular police force; into the 1830's, part-time, underpaid and poorly supervised "watchmen" provided the bulk of the city's protection against crime, disorder and fire. The inadequacy of this arrangement and the informality of New York's government were well illustrated when, in 1812, the common council requested citizens of each ward to form volunteer committees to aid their ward's police magistrates in enforcing the law. The growth of slums, unemployment and crime during these years began to place an unsupportable burden upon such casual arrangements.[13]

The fact that the city's bureaucracy was virtually non existent and its financial arrangements primitive did not, however, imply political democracy or social

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[13]Unfortunately, no modern detailed study of New York's municipal government during the early years of the nineteenth century exists. Useful material can be found in: Sidney I. Pomerantz, New York, An American City, 1783-1803, A Study of Urban Life (New York, 1838), Chaps. II, V, VI; Stokes, Iconography, III, Chap. V; Lossing, History of New York City, I, 235, 238-242. A reading of the city's charters is indispensable; they can be found in James Kent, The Charter of the City of New York with Notes Thereon, Also a Treatise on the Powers and Duties of the Mayor, Aldermen, and Assistant Aldermen, and the Journal of the City Convention (New York, 1836).

egalitarianism. Although the daily rounds of even the poorest New Yorkers might bring them frequently in contact with the mayor, recorder, or the clerk of the common council, these august officials always demanded a proper deference. Until 1804, the government of New York City was highly aristocratic in nature, a coalition of urban lawyers and merchants allied with the state's wealthy landowners. The state constitution limited suffrage to those renting property valued at fifty dollars annually and permitted multiple voting by those who held land in various wards. All executive officers, the mayor, recorder, and common clerk were appointed by the highly conservative council of appointment, on the nomination of the governor; only the common council was elective.[14]

Yet while most New Yorkers still assumed that political power should rest with men of wealth and learning, access to economic and political power was not closed to ordinary men. New York's economy was highly fluid. New business conditions constantly called for new men, and the mercantile elite took on an increasingly nouveau appearance

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[14]Ellis, Short History, p. 121, estimates that in 1790 fewer than one out of every ten male inhabitants of New York City could vote; Stokes concurs. Iconography, I, 369. In 1804, the state legislature eased property qualification for voting in the city by permitting males over twenty-one years, who rented property of the yearly value of twenty-five dollars and who paid taxes, to vote. In 1821, the state constitutional convention, despite bitter protests from political conservatives, did much to modify the undemocratic aspects of the corporation government, but it was not until the 1830's and 1840's that the city's government began to assume modern form, with universal manhood suffrage and elective officers.

as young men from New England villages and Hudson Valley farms, or from Europe, made their fortunes as ship owners, auctioneers or jobbers.[15] Even New York's mechanics and artisans, European visitors commented, appeared extraordinarily prosperous. Their children attended school, learned new trades, seemed in no way bound to follow in their father's footsteps. They, too, must have been aware that New York had not only its Rensselaers and Van Cortlandts, but its Hones, Astors, and Stokeses.

By European standards, moreover, the extremes of poverty and wealth were lacking. Property rarely carried with it the prerogatives of leisure. Merchants supervised their own offices, worked side by side with their clerks, shopped for their families' food by dawn in the city's markets, and when the noon bell rang in the old Dutch church, merchant and clerk alike stopped work to return home for their noon meal. Business offices, with the exception of insurance companies, were small and unpretentious. Some of New York's wealthier citizens still lived near or above their place of business. Education, both general and professional, was still comparatively primitive; lawyers, physicians, and ministers, for example, still received their training essentially

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[15] Albion, New York Port, Chap. 12; [J. A. Scoville], The Old Merchants of New York (5 vols.; New York, 1863-1866), passim.

as apprentices to an established member of the profession.[16]

Nor did relative poverty impose a stigma upon the laboring classes. Artisans and mechanics demanded civil treatment from their social and economic superiors and in general seemed better fed, better educated, and more optimistic than their European counterparts. Their homes, although situated in the city's less healthy and older sections, impressed visitors with their neatness and apparent comfort. Even servants demanded a dignity and civility of treatment amazing to Europeans. "Domestic Servants! This is a weighty article," wrote the English polemicist, William Cobbett, in 1818:

> The man will not wear a livery, any more than he will wear a halter around his neck. This is no great matter; for, as your neighbors' men are of the same taste, you expose yourself to no humiliation on this score. Neither men nor women will allow you to call them servants, and they will take especial care not to call themselves by that name . . . and though they still keep a civil tongue in their head, there is not one of them that will not resent the affront with more bitterness than any other you can offer.

Street begging was rare, the petty thievery characteristic of less prosperous societies a thing of the future. To contemporary Americans and Europeans alike, New York in

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[16]Abram Dayton in his reminiscences, Last Days, gives a detailed but somewhat romanticized and not always accurate picture of New York's early and informal business ways. See, as well, Frank W. Norcross, A History of the New York Swamp (New York, 1901).

1812 and in the years immediately following seemed to hold out work, food and opportunity enough for all.[17] And though deference was still paid in small as in large things to the wealthy and the well-born, there were no American counterparts to the elaborate social distances assumed in every large European city at the beginning of the nineteenth century. Thus European visitors were naturally impressed with the informality, the community of outlook and experience which marked persons of a middling sort as well as their betters.

In 1815, New York--despite the noise and confusion of her wharves, the optimism and ambition of her merchants--had been only a provincial town on the perimeter of a still remote continent. By 1835 she had attained the size, wealth and commercial importance of a major world port.

In these twenty years New York had tripled in size, pushing far north of the fields and farm lands which marked her outer limits during the War of 1812. The Collect had been filled, Lispenard's Meadows drained and converted into commercial and residential districts.[18] Canal Street, no

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[17]William Cobbett, A Year's Residence in the United States of America . . . In Three Parts (London, 1818-1819), pp. iii, 342-346, 377-379; Wright, Views of Society, pp. 11, 34; Henry Bradshaw Fearon, Sketches of America. A Narrative of a Journey of Five Thousand Miles through the Eastern and Western States of America, Contained in Eight Reports (London, 1819), pp. 4-6; Holmes, Account, p. 269; Duncan, Travels, II, 34.

[18]M.C.C., 1784-1831, X, 523-524, XI, 129.

longer a meeting place for the city's amateur fishermen, was one of New York's more fashionable shopping districts. Even suburban Greenwich Village had been overtaken and absorbed by the ever-growing city. Six-story buildings began to line the city's streets. Commerce and business demanded ever more room and real estate values, accordingly, spiralled. New Yorkers, taking advantage of high prices, deserted longtime residences and moved north. In 1824 alone, 1624 new buildings were constructed.[19] By 1831, Philip Hone could comment with a combination of civic pride and practiced resignation:

> The city is now undergoing its usual metamorphosis; many stores and houses are being pulled down, and others altered, to make every inch of ground productive to its utmost extent. Pearl Street and Broadway in particular are rendered almost impassable by the quantity of rubbish with which they are obstructed, and by the dust which is blown about by a keen northwest wind.[20]

Centers of population, residential and commercial areas had shifted drastically. The elegant addresses of 1812 and 1815, Bowling Green, the Battery, Wall Street, had, by the 1830's, become exclusively commercial streets or the site of boarding houses and cheap hotels. With growth came geographic segregation and specialization; no longer did the

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[19]New York's newspapers regularly carried articles commenting rapturously on the city's growth. Cf. New York Commercial Advertiser, August 8, 1818, New York Evening Post, January 8, 1824, and February 10, 1825, New York Mirror, January 20, 1836, and November 30, 1833.

[20]Philip Hone, The Diary of Philip Hone, ed. by Bayard Tuckerman (2 vols.; New York, 1889), I, 41, 350.

city's commercial leaders live above their place of business, or mechanics, merchants and clerks reside near each other. In a city as large and important as New York had become by the 1830's, such simplicity was no longer possible. Now the city was divided by invisible walls. South of City Hall and east of Broadway, commerce and finance dominated. South Street, running along the water's edge, contained the warehouses and offices of the city's leading merchants. Broadway, the Bowery, and the newly completed Canal Street had preempted most of the city's retail trade.[21] The people, meanwhile, moved north: the well-to-do, to the elegant west side, to Leonard, White or Chambers streets, to Park Place or St. John Park; the lower middle class, artisans, clerks, and small shopkeepers, to the streets around Corlears Hook or to newly laid out streets north of City Hall. These areas, frequently built on improperly filled land, promised to be unhealthy and were soon lined with flimsily constructed tenements for the poor.[22]

No longer could New Yorkers conveniently walk the length and breadth of their town. By 1832 omnibuses were common. A railroad ran from Prince Street to 14th Street.

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[21]New York Evening Post, January 8, 1824; Dayton, Last Days, pp. 35-36, 78, 83-84, 140-141; [Goodrich], Picture of New-York, p. 460; Thomas N. Stanford, A Concise Description of the City of New York (New York, 1814), pp. 7-10, 16-17.

[22]Dayton, Last Days, pp. 125-126; M.C.C., 1784-1831, IX, 718-719.

The common council gradually adopted gas lighting for the city's streets, and by 1833 over twenty-six miles of piping had been laid. Country women no longer served laborer and merchant alike from their crude stalls in the city's markets, nor did butchers help to pay the mayor's salary by a penny tax on each sale of meat. Shops had become specialized. The forerunners of the department store had come into being. (A. T. Stewart opened his first retail store in 1823.) Fine meats and vegetables were carried to the kitchen doors of the wealthy, while the poor shopped for their necessities in groceries and grog shops located in the dank and dirty cellars of newly developing tenements.[23]

With growth, the types of houses themselves changed. Living conditions tended to deteriorate with the rise of real estate prices and consequent increases in tenement rentals. Visitors began to comment on the high rents they found in New York. A suitable house for a "respectable tradesman or shopkeeper," one visiting Englishman commented in the early 1820's, brought from £100 to £120 a year. A mechanic, if fortunate enough to manage £15 a year for rent, could no longer secure a modest house on a side street for his family but had to settle into a bare room or two in one of the city's newly rising tenements. Day laborers, seamstresses, domestics, the unemployed did

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[23]Williams, New-York, p. 15; New York Daily Advertiser, September 2, 1823; Thomas F. DeVoe, The Market Book, Containing a Historical Account of the Public Markets in the Cities of New York, Boston, Philadelphia, and Brooklyn (New York, 1862), p. 479.

not fare as well. Several such families might share a single room; others roamed the streets by day, paying a few pennies a night for a bed in a crowded basement room, where the dispossessed of all ages and both sexes crowded together for a fitful sleep.[24]

The fine houses and the new streets, the tremendous growth of population and industry, the new immigrants and the growing boom in real estate prices were still rooted in New York's commerce and in her harbor. It was during the 1820's and 1830's that New York established herself as one of the world's great ports. The completion of the Erie Canal, opening the rich farmland of the old Northwest to population and to her commercial exploitation, the rise of King Cotton, and hence the increasing prosperity of New York's triangular trade with Great Britain and the Southern states, the success of the regular packet lines, and coastal steamships--all helped bring prosperity and expansion to New York's economy.

New York now dominated the eastern seaboard, drawing in capital and talent from Connecticut, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, even Pennsylvania, New Jersey, and the Southern states. The old Knickerbocker families of Dutch, English, and Huguenot ancestries made room in their business world for the sons of New England and New York State who flocked to the city to make, as well as to seek, their

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[24]Holmes, Account, pp. 268-269; New York Evening Post, February 10, 1825; Ernest, Immigrant Life, Chap. V.

fortunes. Dodges, Griswolds, Phelpses and Tappans brought New England concepts of religious seriousness, of the obligations of Christian morality as well as the business ethics and personal ambitions of the sons of hard-working country merchants and farmers. Southerners, Englishmen, Europeans brought to New York new ideas of fashion, the theater, entertaining and dining. New York was becoming cosmopolitan and diversified, ardent and enthusiastic.[25]

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[25]Albion, New York Port, Chap. 12; James Fenimore Cooper, Notions of the Americans: Picked Up by a Travelling Bachelor (2 vols.; Philadelphia, 1833), I, 147-148.

CHAPTER II

Effects of scale and organization inevitably concern the historian of urban life, the student of class relations and philanthropy, as well as the economist and demographer. When a city is physically small, for example, its population relatively homogeneous and its economy expanding, the poor seem manageable, even sympathetic. A few concerned and charitable individuals may well gather together and make hopeful plans to elevate these unfortunates.

But the fifty years that followed the peace of 1815 brought great changes to American cities. Immigrants, often without money or education, poured into New York, into Boston and Philadelphia. Cities grew in size. Few of their residents really knew more than a small part of their own community. Pockets of disease and crime developed in tenement districts hidden from respectable eyes. Urban economies grew more complex, discouraging facile optimism in humanitarian reform. And, gradually, social relations and philanthropic methods changed. Simple organizations to feed and clothe the needy no longer seemed sufficient either to safeguard middle-class society or to fulfill the demands of humanity. Municipal relief, on an ever greater and more

impersonal scale, seemed in itself alarming. And yet the efforts of traditional almshouse departments were woefully inadequate. Responsible city-dwellers sought ways to again personalize charity and, at the same time, to transform the poor, to convert them to evangelical Protestantism, to industry and cleanliness. The city mission movement must be seen as an attempt to answer these problems, as an effort by articulate and pious Americans to grapple with the new world of the nineteenth century.

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New York had always had her poor. The annual budget of the Almshouse and the city's hospital, the existence of orphanages, charity schools and philanthropic societies indicated that each year many New Yorkers could not provide for themselves and had thus to turn to public charity or private alms.[1]

In the early years of the century, however, this did not seem to indicate the existence of a permanently depressed or pauper class. Residents and foreign visitors alike agreed that there was poverty in New York, but quickly added that it was limited largely to two sources, first, to the temporary and general unemployment of winter and other crises--especially depressions and epidemics--and second,

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[1]Schneider, History of Public Welfare, see especially Chaps. VIII and IX for a discussion of the existence of poverty during these early years and the methods, public and private, which New Yorkers adopted to deal with the problem.

to the permanent poverty of the dependent and infirm, the widow and orphan, the crippled and aged. In either case, it was the duty of society and of the active Christian to succor such unfortunates.[2]

The cold and the storms of winter were a constant and understandable cause of poverty in the city; eighteenth and nineteenth century seaports were exposed to their vicissitudes in a way impossible for the mid-twentieth century urbanite to appreciate. Few ships, except the aristocratic packet clippers, would dare the North Atlantic between November and March, and throughout these months the city's merchantmen, their crews discharged, lined the Hudson and East River piers. Stevedores and cartmen could now find little employment. The East River ship yards, which employed thousands during the busy summer months, cut their working force to a handful of men. Country shopkeepers and jobbers returned to their homes to await the spring and new business trips to the city. Retail stores

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[2]In 1801, Edward Livingston, Republican mayor of New York, asserted that the city's poor could be categorized into four main groupings: newly arrived immigrants, sick and unemployed workers, widows and orphans incapable of labor, and discharged convicts. There was no reason why these groups should become a permanent pauper class, Livingston asserted; they could easily be transformed into productive members of society. Charles H. Hunt, Life of Edward Livingston (New York, 1864), pp. 93-97; Pomerantz, New York, p. 337; Cadwallader D. Colden to Charles G. Haines, New York City, December 1, 1819, reprinted by the Society for the Prevention of Pauperism in the City of New York, Second Annual Report (New York, 1820), p. 66. See also Pintard, Letters, I, 17; Knapp, Thomas Eddy, passim; John H. Griscom, Memoir of John Griscom, passim.

and auctioneers trimmed their staffs. Scores of construction workers joined the unemployed, for little building was possible until spring. Even road construction, leveling and paving, resorted to by the municipal government in an effort to make work for the jobless, came to a halt during the depth of the winter.[3]

Winter brought want every year. But certain years saw even greater need. Living in a city dependent upon foreign trade, New York's workers were inevitably the victims of cyclical fluctuations within international commerce. During the years preceding and following the War of 1812, New York was particularly vulnerable to financial panics and depressions. In 1808, Jefferson's embargo plunged the city into a depression which lasted until the peace of 1815, a depression marked by intense suffering among the laboring classes. And peace did not bring immediate prosperity. Commercial and financial conditions remained unstable for a number of years after 1815. Eighteen seventeen and 1819, particularly, were years of acute hardship for the city's workers.[4]

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[3]During the winter of 1804-1805, for instance, the Hudson froze over as early as November. Fuel was scarce and expensive and the poor suffered greatly. This happened again in 1806, 1819, and 1829, to name but a few particularly difficult winters. Isabella Graham, Power of Faith: Exemplified in the Life and Writings of the Late Mrs. Isabella Graham of New York, ed. by Divie Bethune (New York, 1816), pp. 53, 400-404; Pintard, Letters, I, 93, III, 64; Stanford, Concise Description, p. 49; New York Evening Post, February 18, 1817, and January 25, 1821; Hone, Diary (ed., Tuckerman), I, 35.

[4]M.C.C., 1783-1831, IV, 702-704, 713-715, 728-729, 751-752, VIII, 765-769; New York Evening Post, February and March, 1817, passim; Pintard, Letters, I, 201. New York's

Almost as frequent as financial panics were the epidemics and threats of epidemics which emptied the city and curtailed its business. Flight was the normal response to such threats. Whole families fled the city. Insurance companies, banks, merchants moved their offices to the healthier air of Greenwich Village. Houses were boarded up; markets closed; and the ferries ceased to run. Yet only those with some resources could flee. Day laborers, artisans, widows, the sick, the free Negroes remained, often without food, certainly without work. And such epidemics were not infrequent visitors in these early years. Cholera took thousands of lives in 1832 and disrupted the city's life for almost four months. Yellow fever was the most frequent visitor in the years before cholera reached North America, striking seven times between 1793 and 1822. "Fevers" came each summer.[5]

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sensitivity to commercial panics, of course, continued throughout the century. See, for example, P. W. Groot, Albany, to James W. Beekman, February 24, 1838, Beekman Papers, Box 5, folder 2, Manuscript Division, New York Historical Society, and Schneider, pp. 141-177.

[5]William Vaux, Memorable Days in America: being a Journal of a Tour to the United States (London, 1823), pp. 155-156; Blaine, Excursion, pp. 11-12; New York Evening Post, September 6, 7 and 18, 1819, and July 23, 1832; Pintard, Letters, I, 220-224, 227-228, II, 83, IV, 66, 69, 72-78; John H. Griscom, A History, Chronological and Circumstantial, of the Visitations of Yellow Fever at New York (New York, 1858). For two modern discussions of the impact of an epidemic on a city, see John Powell, Bring Out Your Dead. The Great Plague of Yellow Fever in Philadelphia in 1793 (Philadelphia, 1949), and Charles Rosenberg, The Cholera Years (Chicago, 1962).

The inclemency of winter, the fluctuations of business, the misfortunes of disease were constantly recurring, unrelated seemingly to individual capabilities. Each demanded the exertions of the charitable. Equally fortuitous, yet more lasting and personal, was the poverty of widows, of the orphaned, of the chronically ill. And in nineteenth century America, marked as it was by a high mortality rate and primitive medical knowledge, the sick, the widow, and the orphan were familiar and sympathy-provoking members of society.

New Yorkers, confident of their city's continued growth and prosperity, tended to view poverty as a temporary and fortuitous affliction. This clearly was an attitude which encouraged private philanthropy. And just as New Yorkers saw two primary sources of poverty, so they developed two principal means of alleviating it. To deal with seasonal or sporadic unemployment, they resorted to temporary methods of feeding and employing the poor, soup kitchens, fuel societies, public works. For the needs of the chronically sick and the orphaned, New Yorkers evolved more permanent institutional solutions, establishing hospitals, charity schools, and orphan asylums.

New Yorkers had traditionally met emergencies with informal, voluntaristic measures. During financial panics, they held public meetings to raise emergency funds, established ad hoc committees of merchants to canvass the several wards, seeking out the destitute and raising funds from

their well-to-do neighbors. Their wives and daughters, through their churches, organized sewing societies which both clothed and employed women and children. In 1817, for instance, a winter of unprecedented cold, a commercial panic threw hundreds out of work; charitable New Yorkers quickly turned a deserted home in the old commercial district into a giant soup kitchen and during the difficult months of January, February and March were able to feed an average of three thousand daily. Others organized a public rally at the fashionable City Hotel, formed ward committees and on the first day of solicitation raised what was then the substantial sum of $957.50. New Yorkers turned as well to their city corporation when faced with financial crises. Indeed public-spirited New Yorkers during this period always solicited state and municipal funds whenever they undertook some charitable activity. During the initial panic following the Embargo of 1808, for example, the city established a soup kitchen in the almshouse, distributing rations to a weekly average of 8,345 persons; it employed another 118 men in leveling the hills surrounding the Fresh Water Pond and in extending city streets.[6]

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[6]Stanford, Concise Description, p. 49; Pintard, Letters, I, 93, II, 330, III, 216, IV, 82, 91; Hone, Diary (ed., Tuckerman), I, 35; New York Evening Post, January 25 and 27, 1821; M.C.C., 1784-1831, XI, 452; letter, Isabella Graham, New York, to Dr. H. M., Rothsay, Bute, Scotland, November 11, 1799, Graham, Power of Faith, pp. 382-383, also p. 53. Disease and epidemics were a particularly effective, because dramatic, means of

The needs of the comparatively small number of permanently dependent were cared for by a variety of small private societies as well as by the municipality through its almshouse department. As early as 1797, for example, a group of wealthy and charitable matrons organized the Society for the Relief of Poor Widows with Small Children. Through this organization, they sought jobs as domestics or seamstresses for respectable yet impecunious women, provided them with food, fuel, and clothing, taught improving lessons in cleanliness, frugality and household management. The benevolent ladies sent orphaned children to charity schools or apprenticed them to established artisans. They also distributed Bibles and religious tracts to the widows, questioned them as to their religious lives and hoped that, though destitute, these widows might still be among the saved and their children enabled to rise in society. Though this connection between external salvation

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drawing middle-class attention to the existence of poverty. Perhaps for this reason we find that organizations established to deal with the poor during epidemics frequently developed into permanent philanthropic societies. John Cox, Quakerism in the City of New York, 1657-1930 (New York, 1930), p. 47, notes that a sewing society established by a group of twenty women from the 20th Street Friends' Meeting to aid cholera victims developed into The Sewing Society, which gave clothing and food to New York's poor long after the cholera had departed. John Stanford in "A Sketch of the Active Life of Mrs. Sarah Hoffman," in The Heavenly Sisters, ed. by T. Sharp (Philadelphia, 1822), p. 122, claimed that the suffering of the poor during the 1798 yellow fever epidemic led to the formation of the long-lived Society for the Relief of Poor Widows with Young Children; cf. Bethune, "Life of Mrs. Isabella Graham," in Graham, Power of Faith, pp. 46-47.

and temporal prosperity was not strictly theological, it was obviously appealing.[7] Such missionary work was not the primary objective of the society. The ladies, being themselves sincerely devout and sympathizing with the poor, had simply sought to aid those widows and orphans in all ways, religious as well as secular.

The experience of these pious matrons in caring for indigent women and children led a number of them to found and support other, similar organizations. Mrs. Isabella Graham, for example, and her daughter Joanna, the wife of the merchant and philanthropist, Divie Bethune, led a number of New York women in organizing the New York Orphan Asylum, and later in establishing the infant and girl's departments of the free school system. Others worked through their churches and denominations to establish the local charity schools which soon came to dot the city. Inspired by the efforts of Mrs. Graham, New Yorkers organized the Free School Society, the city's first public school system, in 1806. Many, viewing free Negroes in the same light as widows and orphans, helped establish African churches and charity schools for New York's freedmen. The sick, too, were considered. New Yorkers could boast of

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[7]New York Society for the Relief of Poor Widows with Small Children (hereinafter referred to as N.Y.S.R.P.W.S.C.), Constitution /with Act of Incorporation/ (New York, 1800); N.Y.S.R.P.W.S.C., An Act to Incorporate the Society for the Relief of Poor Widows with Small Children, Passed April 2, 1802 (New York, 1802); N.Y.S.R.P.W.S.C., The By-laws and Regulations to which Is Added a List of the Subscribers and the Donations (New York, 1802). See also Bethune, "Life," pp. 9-72, and Stanford, "Mrs. Sarah Hoffman," in Heavenly Sisters, for contemporary accounts of the Society.

some of America's most advanced institutions for the treatment of the insane and the physically ill: the New York Dispensary, the New York Hospital, the Bloomingdale Asylum for the Insane, the New York Institution for the Instruction of the Deaf and Dumb. The Humane Society fed and clothed imprisoned debtors.[8]

But perhaps the most characteristic of New York's private efforts to aid the poor in the nineteenth century's opening years was the Society for the Prevention of Pauperism in the City of New York. Organized in 1814 by leaders of New York's mercantile and philanthropic community, by Thomas Eddy, Divie Bethune, John Pintard and John Griscom, the Society hoped through assuming a systematic and "scientific" view of New York's economy and the character of the poor to permanently eliminate poverty from their city. Society members undertook to study such assumed causes of poverty as gambling, intemperance, winter unemployment, and the debtor's prison. They established two banks for savings (an important financial and charitable innovation in the years before 1820), encouraged

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[8]Stanford, "Mrs. Sarah Hoffman," in Heavenly Sisters; Bethune, "Life," passim; Bourne, Public School Society; Charles C. Andrews, The History of the New-York African Free Schools From their Establishment in 1787 to the Present Time (New York, 1830); William Ludlum, Dispensaries. Their Origin, Progress and Efficiency (New York, 1876); J. F. Richmond, New York and Its Institutions, 1609-1872, A Library of Information (New York, 1872). In 1829, John Pintard reported the formation of a Female Asylum for Lying-in Women, Pintard, Letters, III, 11.

education and libraries for the working classes, attempted to suppress lotteries and all forms of gambling, and advocated sweeping reforms in the city's prisons and almshouse.[9]

In many ways the first two decades of the nineteenth century were golden years for New York. They were years of optimism and self-assurance, a period of fundamental economic growth. They were, as well, still years of comparative intimacy and simplicity. New York's population was small and largely homogeneous, the city compact and relatively free from crime and slums. The poor were still small in number. Their poverty for the most part seemed the product of misfortune or general hard times. The charities that were founded, while ultimately springing from the religious beliefs of their founders, were limited largely to the simple pragmatic goals of supplying the immediate needs of society's unfortunates; they fed the unemployed, aided the widowed and orphaned, cared for the sick and the insane.

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[9]New York Society for the Prevention of Pauperism (hereinafter referred to as N.Y.S.P.P.), Second Annual Report for the Year 1819-1820 (New York, 1820); N.Y.S.P.P., Third Annual Report for the Year 1820-1821 (New York, 1821); N.Y.S.P.P., Fourth Annual Report for the Year 1821-1822 (New York, 1822). See as well discussions of the Society in B. K. Peirce, A Half Century with Juvenile Delinquents; or, the New York House of Refuge and Its Times (New York, 1869), especially Chap. II; Griscom, Memoir, especially Chap. V; Pintard, Letters, passim.

But as New York grew in size, in population, and in wealth, the distance which lay between different sections of the city and different social classes greatly increased. The city grew in the number of its fine neighborhoods and its elegant houses, but more rapidly in the number of its poor, in its slums, in its crime and mortality rates. By the mid-1830's, New York was a true metropolis, facing the social problems which affected major cities throughout the world.

Perhaps the principal human problem which the city's growth brought was its new and greatly changed population. With the mid-1820's, New York became the destination of an ever growing number of immigrants. Between 1820 and 1830, 92,884 immigrants landed at the port of New York; the following decade, over 400,000. Many prospective New Yorkers came as well from the farms and villages of New England and New York State, others from the middle echelons of European commercial houses. These had usually some small resources to fall back upon. But others did not, for the poor of Europe had discovered America's great port of entry. And for every Tappan or Bethune, New York made room for a thousand jobless, poorly educated Irishmen, Germans or Englishmen. Many of these, driven by poverty or enticed by unrealistic expectations, came without funds or with numbers of dependents. Others, defrauded in passage,

weakened by the long voyage, arrived in the city sick, destitute, without friends or the prospect of employment.[10] Unable in many cases to push further inland, these penniless new arrivals settled into the city, greatly altering its physical appearance, its social and class relationships, its economy--and of course its philanthropic activities.

Where and how did these New Yorkers live? Able to afford only the cheapest accommodations and needing to live near their jobs, they had no choice but to seek homes

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[10]Demographers have recently begun to question just how rapid was the growth of the eastern seaboard cities, but New York's growth was clearly far more rapid than that of the rival ports. One factor in this growth was immigration. Everett S. Lee and Michael Lalli, "Population," in The Growth of Seaboard Cities, 1790-1825, ed. by David T. Gilchrist (Charlottesville, Va., 1967), pp. 25-37. Actual statistics for the number of immigrants who remained in New York City are difficult to obtain. Kate Claghorn, "The Foreign Immigrant in New York City," United States Industrial Commission Reports (Washington, D. C., 1901), XV, 464, deduces from statistics available that the immigrant population of New York City was large and increased steadily from the early 1820's on. Between 1820 and 1830, 92,884 immigrants arrived in New York City and the city's population increased by 78,883 during this decade. During the next decade, 407,716 immigrants landed at New York, and the city's population increased by 110,121. Between 1820 and 1830, 81,827 immigrants arrived in New York City from Great Britain and Ireland, 7,729 from Germany. Between 1831 and 1840, 283,191 arrived from Great Britain and Ireland, 152,454 from Germany. These statistics but confirm the contemporary impression. Holmes, Account, pp. 370-371. See also N.Y.S.P.P., Second Annual Report, 1819-1820, pp. 18-25; "Report of the Committee on the Almshouse and the Penitentiary to the Common Council," M.C.C., 1784-1831, XIII, 89-95. To understand the problem in adjustment which New York's government, economy and philanthropic institutions faced, one should compare these figures for the mid-1820's with those a decade later. During the year ending September 30, 1824, 4,889 persons arrived at New York Port. For the year ending December 31, 1835, 32,715 passengers entered the port. Arrivals of Alien Passengers and Immigrants, table 7, p. 64, cited in Stokes, Iconography, V, 1642, 1736.

in the most crowded and unhealthy sections of the city. At first such new Americans rented rooms in the cheap boarding houses which in the 1820's had sprung up along the Hudson River piers. Once familiar with the city, they sought out compatriots and filtered into the city's developing slum neighborhoods. Few immigrant families could afford to rent more than one or at most two rooms; ten or twelve families would crowd into what had once been a private dwelling, filling its basement and attic, overburdening primitive sanitary facilities. These were the sometime homes of the well-to-do, situated near the Battery, along the lower west side, or in the narrow streets east of Broadway. Here the poor hoped to find jobs as stevedores, day laborers or cartmen. But as the numbers of immigrants steadily increased, investors and real estate speculators began to build clapboard tenements specifically to house numbers of immigrant families. Located in newer sections of the city, on cheap land bordering the waterfront, these tenements rapidly degenerated into immigrant slums.[11]

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[11]Ernst, Immigrant, Chaps. 4 and 5; New York Mirror, February 2, 1828; Garrett Forbes, "The City Inspector's Report for the Year, 1834," cited, Claghorn, "Foreign Immigrant," p. 452; Dwight, Travels, III, 450. John H. Griscom, in The Sanitary Condition of the Laboring Population of the City of New York (New York, 1845), p. 15, points to the early overcrowding of the sixth ward, filled with poorly constructed tenements built during the 1820's on the made-land which covered the Collect and Lispenard's Meadows.

By the 1830's, New York could boast of at least three major areas of substandard, multi-family houses: Corlear's Hook, the Negro ghetto around Bancker Street, and the Five Points.[12] All shared characteristics typical of the slum, an unhealthy physical setting, overcrowding, poor sanitation, high crime and mortality rates. During the yellow fever epidemic of 1820, for example, the first cases appeared among the Bancker Street Negroes, and of 299 fever deaths that year, 138 were among Negroes. The even more serious cholera epidemics of 1832 and 1849 first broke out among the Irish immigrant population in the Five Points vicinity, while the annual city health inspector's reports and other public health investigations all pointed to the unhealthy condition of such slums.[13]

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[12]The Five Points derived its name from the peculiar intersection of five streets to form a star-shaped square (ironically known as Paradise Square) at its center. These streets were: Mulberry, Orange (now Baxter), Anthony (now Worth), Cross (now Park) and Little Water (no longer in existence).

[13]New York City Board of Health, A Statement of Facts Relative to the Late Fever which Appeared in Bancker-Street and its Vicinity (New York, 1821); John H. Griscom, A History, Chronological and Circumstantial, of the Visitations of Yellow Fever at New York (New York, 1858). For recent discussions, cf. Lloyd G. Stevenson, "Putting Disease on the Map: the Early Use of Spot Maps in the Study of Yellow Fever," Journal of the History of Medicine and Allied Sciences, XX (1965), 226-261; John Duffy, "An Account of the Epidemic Fevers that Prevailed in the City of New York from 1791-1822," New York Historical Society Quarterly, L (October, 1966), 333-64. See as well references in Rosenberg, Cholera Years, Part I. These areas were, significantly, the neighborhoods where New York's first city missionaries labored.

The Five Points was certainly the best known of these shabby areas. Located at the center of the city, a few blocks north of City Hall, within sight of the elegant shops of Broadway, the Five Points was to remain an eyesore, a reservoir of disease, crime and prostitution far into the century. As such it came to symbolize for contemporaries all the dangers inherent in the growth of urban poverty. The Five Points was located on the site of the Fresh Water Pond, in the early years of the nineteenth century a bucolic resort for fishing and strolling. With the end of the War of 1812 and the city's expansion northward, Negroes and immigrants built shanties around the pond and tanners polluted its water with the carcasses of dead animals. By 1821, the area had become a public nuisance and the corporation ordered the pond filled and the adjacent hills leveled. This made-land, however, remained damp and, it was feared, pestilential. Despite the pleas of Robert Fulton and Eli Whitney for intelligent "urban planning" in the area, the well-to-do shunned it. By the mid-thirties it had become known as the "Five Points," the site of cheap immigrant tenements, fully developed as the American paradigm of urban crime and poverty.[14]

As early as 1829, the New York Evening Post complained that assaults and disorders occurred there "almost daily."

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[14] M.C.C., 1784-1831, VII, 168-169, and also VIII, 257-258. In June, 1821, the New York State legislature appointed Robert Fulton, Eli Whitney and Cornelius Howard commissioners to study proposals for draining the Collect

The Five Points, the paper reported, "had become the most dangerous place in our city." A few weeks later, the committees on Police, Jail and Bridewell of the common council in a joint report termed the Five Points "a place of great disorder and crime . . . ."[15] To improve the situation, the common council voted in 1831 to widen the streets around the Five Points, tear down the worst tenements and construct a public square.[16] But this early effort at urban renewal had little effect on the slum or its inhabitants. A few years later, in 1833, David Fanshaw, editor of the fashionable New York Mirror and Ladies Literary Gazette, commented vehemently upon conditions at the Five Points:

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and laying out streets. These commissioners presented their report February 15, 1813; they predicted that the area, low and swampy even if drained, would always present a health problem, unless the common council exerted some control over the types of houses to be built there. They predicted that the section around the Collect could develop into a notoriously unhealthy slum and urged municipal planning. Cited at length, Stokes, Iconography, V, 1557-1558, also III, 562.

[15]New York Evening Post, March 19, 1829, and May 13, 1830.

[16]In 1829 the street committee of the common council reported that "nearly all the buildings . . . are in ruinous condition . . . and occupied by the lowest description and most degraded and abandoned of the human Species. Enormities of every kind (of which the public are but too well informed) are daily committed in that sink of iniquity, the which your Committee forbear to particularize." M.C.C., 1784-1831, XVIII, 19-20, also 11-12. New York City, Board of Assistants, Documents, I (New York, 1835), 163-168; New York Mirror, May 9, 1829, and January 1, 1831.

> Our country subscribers are, perhaps, not all aware that our goodly city has already commenced rivalling London in its haunts of beggary and crime. . . . The rags and dirt, disease and iniquity congregated there [the Five Points], were by no means an ordinary sight. There were whole troops of drunken, disgusting women . . . sunk into the lowest grades of woe and degradation. Men wrapped in shreds and patches--who might have sat to a painter for banditti--grocery stores--or rather grog shops--a look into which was enough to turn the stomach--and any indefinite number of dirty-faced, naked, unowned children.

By this time rioting and general disorder had become an accepted part of Five Points life, especially as hostility between immigrants and the native-born increased. Major riots broke out in 1833 and 1835. In July of 1833 the situation had proved too much for the police, and the mayor had to call upon volunteer fire companies and militia regiments to quiet the disorder.[17]

Respectable New Yorkers avoided the Five Points and the city's other pockets of poverty and filth. No business offices or fashionable shops beckoned in these enclaves; no friends' homes or fashionable churches were to be found in such locales. Thus, these slums developed apart from the mainstream of New York life, constantly fed by immigration and the addition of free Negroes and unskilled native laborers; by the end of the 1820's, New Yorkers awoke to find sections of their city through which no respectable person could walk and to realize that some among their fellow

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[17]New York Mirror, May 18, 1833, January 1, 1831; New York Evening Post, March 19, 1829, June 22, 23, 24, 25, 1835; Stokes, Iconography, III, 522.

citizens seemed no different from the denizens of England's worst almshouses and prisons.

Indeed, it took rioting, disease, and epidemics to arouse prosperous and articulate New Yorkers to conditions in their city. Cholera, as we have noticed for instance, struck first among the poor, and New Yorkers learned suddenly and with horror of houses such as that at 31 Renwick Street, which consisted of a basement and two rooms, the home of twenty men, women, and children. "In the yard of this place," the Commercial Advertiser reported, "the principal occupant keeps from forty to fifty hogs, four cows, and two horses. The place is so filthy that the first physician called . . . refused to enter the house . . . ." Equally notorious was a pie-shaped building between Christopher and Grove streets, in the suburban ninth ward. This structure, 120 feet in length, was thirty-nine feet wide at one end and only four feet wide at the other. It housed forty-one families who shared one public privy in the crowded and filthy front yard.[18]

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[18]New York City, Board of Aldermen, Documents, II (New York, 1836), 145-152; New York Commercial Advertiser, July 25, 1832; William Caruthers, A Kentuckian in New York Or, The Adventures of Three Southrons by a Virginian (2 vols.; New York, 1834), I, 54. The effectiveness of epidemics and disease in awakening New Yorkers to the social problems of their city can be seen in the comment of one New York matron at the height of the 1832 cholera epidemic. "No one notices the poor ordinarily. Those who frequently are to be found lying in the streets, are now picked up and taken to the hospitals--only on occasions such as this is the true extent of the misery of the City known." Mrs. P. Roosevelt to S. R. Johnson, July 13, 1832. Roosevelt Papers, General Theological Seminary, New York City.

Some New Yorkers, having read accounts of the Five Points, of Renwick and Christopher streets, could no longer think of poverty in traditional terms, of the poor being an inherently limited group--composed of widows, orphans, the infirm, the temporarily unemployed and a scattering of unworthy laggards or drunkards. This poverty they had always felt some sympathy for; at least, they felt, it could be understood and ameliorated. But the new poor of the Five Points and similar areas were an alien, a threatening force. Existing outside respectable society, they embodied the antitheses of all those virtues cherished by that society--Protestantism, cleanliness, moderation, sobriety, and hard work. They nullified, by their sheer numbers and desperate needs, traditional methods of charitable support and, indeed, posed in the minds of many concerned New Yorkers a real threat to social order and tranquillity.

Somewhat dismayed, thoughtful New Yorkers began naturally to seek new explanations for poverty. They fastened upon two factors which provided a convenient and seemingly realistic framework within which poverty could be understood and, hopefully, dealt with. Intemperance and immigration were the two causes which seemed to contemporaries to underlie the bulk of New York's poverty. Both removed the responsibility for the existence of poverty from American society, in the one case placing it upon individual vice, in the other, upon the inequities

and oppression of European governments. Both implied no questioning of fundamental social relationships. Both explanations coalesced--and thus reinforced each other--in the dramatic image of the drunken Irish or German pauper.

Such an attitude could be seen in John Pintard's disdainful reflections upon "the multitude of newcomers amongst whom are a large portion of the lower offscourings of Europe, who live in low damp dwellings crowded to excess . . . improvident, careless, and filthy . . . ."[19] Similar sentiments began to appear with increasing frequency in the reports of the Society for the Prevention of Pauperism in the City of New York, which had by the 1820's become far less optimistic in attitude toward the prospects of eliminating poverty in the city--and increasingly willing to place upon immigration the responsibility for these more negative views.

> They are frequently found destitute in our streets; . . . they are found in our alms-houses, and in our hospitals; they are found at the bar of our criminal tribunals, in our bridewell, our penitentiary and our state prison. . . . For years and generations will Europe continue to send forth her surplus population. . . . Over this subject can we longer slumber? Shall we behold a moral contagion spreading and expanding the most inveterate ravages amid the ranks of our growing population, without endeavoring to arrest its progress? Shall this mass be suddenly identified with ourselves and our children, inculcating their habits and their principles, without an anxious effort to stay the impending calamity?[20]

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[19]Pintard, Letters, I, 217.

[20]N.Y.S.P.P., Second Annual Report, pp. 20-21.

As early as 1819, the coincidence of economic disaster with the large-scale immigration of poverty-stricken Europeans had done much to link immigration with pauperism in the minds of many New Yorkers. Merchant Charles G. Haines, secretary of the Society for the Prevention of Pauperism, wrote Mayor Cadwallader Colden that year urging the city government to adopt measures to deter immigrants from landing in the city. (The mayor did, in fact, begin to enforce an old bonding requirement for incoming immigrants.) Those immigrants who did arrive found their reception a cold one. Merchants quarreled even with respectable and educated immigrants who bore impeccable letters of introduction--complaining that the city was already saturated with immigrants. The less respectable were cursed and ridiculed by laborers and merchants alike as they walked in the city's streets.[21]

Returning prosperity somewhat allayed this ill-will, but the immigrant laborer remained for many a figure of suspicion and distaste. Mark Beaufoy, a visitor to the

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[21]In his letter to Cadwallader Colden, Haines wrote: "It appears that the present number of paupers in the City of New-York, is not much less than ten thousand. New swarms are continually arriving from Europe and nothing but a comprehensive and severe system of prevention can avert crimes and invasions of peace and security . . . ." In the same annual report, the N.Y.S.P.P., for the first time, attributed poverty in New York City to large-scale immigration, claiming that between March 1, 1818, and November 1, 1819, 18,930 foreigners arrived in New York City directly from Europe, while nearly 10,000 Europeans came to New York from Canada during the same years. N.Y.S.P.P., Second Annual Report, pp. 45-46, 17-20. See also Pintard, Letters, I, 262-263.

city, remarked in 1827 that "the lowest stations of the hard-working classes are generally filled by Irishmen, who are as much vilified here, whether justly or not I cannot tell, as in England or Scotland." "They have brought the cholera this year," Philip Hone warned dourly in the summer of 1832, "and they will always bring wretchedness and want." Samuel F. B. Morse represented an extreme position, yet he did express a fear which immigration inspired in the minds of some conservative and respectable New Yorkers, a fear, of course, intensified by the Catholic faith of so many of the immigrants. "How is it possible," Morse wrote,

> that foreign turbulence imported by ship-loads, that and ignorance in hundreds of thousands of human priest-controlled machines, should suddenly be thrown into our society, and not produce here turbulence and excess? Can one throw mud into pure water and not disturb its clearness?[22]

The immigrants, through their crimes, drunkenness and poverty, cost the city many thousands of dollars each year. But more alarming by far, many New Yorkers maintained, was their bequest to America's future, the children which they conceived and reared in the city's slums. Illiterate, without religion or a trade, these children seemed fit only for

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[22]Mark Beaufoy, Tour Through Parts of the United States and Canada (London, 1828), pp. 15-16; Philip Hone, Diary, September 20, 1832, Manuscript Division, New York Historical Society; An American [S. F. B. Morse], Imminent Dangers to the Free Institutions of the United States through Immigration, and the Present State of the Naturalization Laws. A Series of Numbers Originally Published in the New York Journal of Commerce (New York, 1835), p. iv.

a life of drunkenness and crime. "Every person that frequents the out-streets of this city," philanthropist and educator John Griscom wrote in 1823,

> must be struck with the ragged and uncleanly appearance, the vile language and the idle and miserable habits of great numbers of children, most of whom are of an age suitable for schools, or for some useful employment. . . . Accustomed, in many instances, to witness at home nothing in the way of example, but what is degrading; early taught to observe intemperance, and to hear obscene and profane language without disgust; obliged to beg, and even encouraged to acts of dishonesty, to satisfy the wants induced by the indolence of their parents,--what can be expected but that such children will, in due time, become responsible to the law for crimes, which have thus in a manner been forced upon them?

Even more than their immigrant parents, these children came to represent a threatening symbol of the dangers to American society being bred in the city's slums.[23]

Immigration had brought European poverty to America. Intemperance created it here. Or so at least it seemed to many Americans. The first half of the nineteenth century was a period of evangelical fervor and, in the terminology of the day, active benevolence. The most universal of the era's aggressively philanthropic reforms was the crusade for temperance. It was against this background of widespread temperance agitation that New Yorkers attempted to discern the causes of poverty. None could deny that the early nineteenth century was a hard-drinking era. Workers

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[23]John Griscom, quoted by John H. Griscom, Memoir, pp. 179-180; George B. Arnold, Second Semi-Annual Report of His Services as Minister at Large in New York (New York, 1834), p. 17.

received a dram as part of their daily pay; eminently proper matrons thought nothing of giving their maids and laundresses a glass of rum to help them through their daily chores. New Year's Day, the Fourth of July and other holidays were traditionally days of revelry and heavy drinking. But by the mid-twenties, the appeals of temperance advocates and evangelical ministers had begun to have an effect. Middle-class employers were coming to find that workers did not really need liquor to sustain strenuous physical labor and were somewhat taken aback to discover the number of groggeries and dram-shops in their city. Even the amount of spirits consumed at the private gatherings of the wealthy diminished as drunkenness was increasingly frowned upon.

As New Yorkers sought to understand the sudden growth of poverty and crime in their city, they turned increasingly to temperance arguments. Clearly the poor were intemperate; the conclusion that alcohol caused their poverty seemed all too obvious. Certainly it was a factor understandable and appealing to a morally committed generation, a generation perhaps overly fond of emotional and moralistic resolutions to social dilemmas. The evolution of this type of thought can be clearly seen in the experience of philanthropist John Pintard (as detailed in a decades-long correspondence with his married daughter). Pintard wrote in 1817 that he had helped organize a society to prevent pauperism, and must now study the origins of poverty in the city. At

first, he noted many causes: lotteries, lack of savings banks, immigration. Gradually, however, he settled upon one leading cause, intemperance.[24]

He was not alone in this conviction. As early as 1817, a meeting of citizens in New York, "to inquire into the situation of the poor and the cause of mendicity," resolved that intemperance among workers was a major cause of poverty in the city. Two years later, the Society for the Prevention of Pauperism concurred, calling intemperance "the most productive source of human wretchedness in all its complicated forms." The Society that year began a drive to prohibit groceries from selling liquor, for it felt that most workers were trapped into the drinking habit while buying groceries in stores which sold both liquor and food. In 1819 Mayor Cadwallader Colden, for example, attempted to drastically reduce the number of liquor licenses issued by the city government. John Pintard urged that the city place a prohibitive tax on whiskey and encourage laborers to turn instead to malt beverages. By the 1830's, most philanthropic groups were urging temperance upon workers and an organization such as the New York City Tract Society was actively distributing temperance tracts to the city's poor.[25]

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[24]Pintard, Letters, I, 97-98, II, 8, 272, III, 51-52, 152-153.

[25]M.C.C., 1784-1831, IX, 38-39; N.Y.S.P.P., Fourth Annual Report, 1821 (New York, 1821), p. 6; Letter, Cadwallader D. Colden to Charles G. Haines, Manager, N.Y.S.P.P.,

Not all New Yorkers, however, were willing to attribute the city's new poverty exclusively to immigration and intemperance.[26] Some, of course, even among those who found personal contacts with the poor distasteful, insisted that economic organization played an important role in the creation of poverty and urged fellow citizens to help the poor and sympathize with them. These men pointed to low wages, to unhealthy and degraded living conditions as causes of vice, immorality and drunkenness. In 1829, for example, economist and publisher Mathew Carey issued his Plea for the Poor. Carey had made a study of the wages paid urban workers, especially women. The Philadelphian reported that an industrious seamstress in any northern city could simply not support herself on prevailing piece-work scales. Prostitution and crime were inevitable by-products of such inadequate wages.[27] Fellow Philadelphian

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December 1, 1819, quoted, N.Y.S.P.P., Second Annual Report; Duncan, Travels, II, 322-323. In March, 1829, the New York City Tract Society (hereinafter referred to as N.Y.C.T.S.) distributed 30,000 copies of Kittredge's Address and the following year 30,000 copies of Dickenson's Appeal to American Youth, both temperance pamphlets, New York City Temperance Society, First Annual Report (New York, 1830), pp. 7-8.

[26]There were, of course, many of a more radical persuasion, whom we usually associate with the Tom Paine Clubs, the Workingmen's Parties, or the Fanny Wright movement, who did attribute poverty exclusively to economic and social injustice. But these groups were hardly representative of respectable Protestant opinion.

[27]Mathew Carey, A Plea for the Poor. An Enquiry How Far the Charges Against Them of Improvidence, Idleness and Dissipation Are Founded in Truth. By a Citizen of Philadelphia (Philadelphia, 1831).

Ezra Stiles Ely, who as a young man had been one of New York's first city missionaries, vigorously supported this position. Southern slaves, he wrote bitterly, fared better than northern seamstresses. In the years between 1811 and 1813, when Ely served as chaplain to the city's almshouses, he had protested against the life of poverty which low wages forced on widows and spinsters. Women were paid only twelve cents for making "common shirts" or pantaloons, yet he complained, they had to pay twenty-five dollars a year for the rent of one tiny slum room.[28] And, of course, even the strongest belief in the evils of immigration, in the temptations of alcohol, did not exclude a simultaneous belief in the existence of economic abuse and exploitation as a collateral cause of poverty.

By the 1830's, New York harbored slums, a class of unskilled and often illiterate immigrant poor, rising crime and mortality rates. Her rapid growth in population, in physical size, and in complexity of economic structure seemed increasingly to divide the different classes in the city: merchant from clerk or artisan, native from immigrant, Catholic from Protestant. Concern, even anxiety, began to affect the middle class as they studied the new social problems which faced their city. The social

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[28]Ezra Stiles Ely, Visits of Mercy; or, The journals of the Rev. Ezra Stiles Ely, D.D., written while he was stated preacher to the hospital and alms-house, in the city of New York (Philadelphia, 1829).

relations of the century's early years took on a correspondingly romantic glow.

It was against this background that New York's first three city missions, the New York City Tract Society, the American Female Guardian Society, and the New York Protestant Episcopal City Mission Society, were established; all three sought to destroy class barriers and help the "new poor." Both New Yorkers' remembrance of former social simplicity and rude prosperity and their anxiety when facing social and economic changes affected the methods and aims of these city missions.

But they were not simply relief or welfare organizations. The missions were religious societies with religious aims. Why were they founded? Why did New Yorkers turn to religious organizations to distribute outdoor relief, employ the unemployed, educate and clothe neglected children? To begin to understand the city missions we must look beyond the city and its social needs, to other influences upon the minds of respectable New Yorkers. And in the first third of the nineteenth century, perhaps the single most important influence upon pious and philanthropic Americans was the religious and social phenomenon known as the Second Great Awakening. This was a deeply pietistic religious awakening which swept through America from the early 1790's through the 1830's. In a very real sense, as we shall see, the city missions were--like many other voluntaristic

reform groups--a direct consequence and legacy of this evangelistic impulse.

It would be an oversimplification to argue that urban philanthropy was essentially secular before the advent of this converting influence--yet it would have a certain validity. Though New York's philanthropists before 1820 were themselves, whether Quaker or Calvinist, men and women of great personal piety, and though this piety motivated their benevolence and informed their attitude toward its objects--their efforts were, as we have argued, essentially limited and pragmatic. The millennial enthusiasm of the next generation provided a motivation and world view quite different in character.

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CHAPTER III

In 1811, a Connecticut visitor to New York, President Timothy Dwight of Yale, compiled a list of the city's leading benevolent societies. Without exception they were pragmatic in approach and circumscribed in aim: the Humane Society, for the relief of debtors and the destitute generally, the German Society, to aid German Immigrants, the Dispensary, for free medical care for the poor, the Society for the Relief of Poor Widows with Small Children, the Marine Society, to relieve the "distressed masters of ships, their wives and orphans," the Marine Hospital on Staten Island, the Sailor's Snug Harbor and the Society of Mechanics and Tradesmen. Two years later, in 1813, Horatio Gates Spafford in his Gazeteer of New York State compiled another list of some forty benevolent institutions; again almost all had pragmatic and secular ends. They included the Albion Benevolent Society, the Association for the Relief of Disabled Firemen, a House Carpenters' Society, a Masonic Society, the Tammany Society, the Kine-Pock Institution, a lying-in hospital, and one of New York's most popular charities, the Free School Society.[1]

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[1]Dwight, Travels, pp. 440-441; Spafford, Gazeteer, p. 250.

Charitable New Yorkers during the first two decades of the century accepted with little question their responsibility as individuals in caring for the needy of their city. Their approach was essentially eclectic and temporal. Though religious values and motivations suffused all these secular organizations, their immediate object was to improve the day-to-day life of the poor. Systematic evangelization of the poor as a specific reform had yet to become for them an important philanthropic object, or even a significant tactic in ameliorating the condition of the outcast poor.

In 1833, however, when Edwin Williams published his guide book, New York as It Is in 1833, the list of religious charities far exceeded its secular counterpart.[2] The philanthropic imagination of the 1820's and 1830's was engrossed by Sunday schools, by Bible and religious tract societies, by missionary efforts to convert everyone from the merchants and sailors of the American cities to the Burmese and Indians of Asia. The most urgent charity now seemed to be that of converting to evangelical Protestantism the unbelieving wherever they lived in America or overseas, whatever their status in society. Religion had become increasingly evangelical, even millennial. In this upsurge of enthusiastic optimism, believers were impelled not only to perfect their own spiritual life, but to purify that of

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[2]Williams, New-York as It Is, pp. 59-82.

their fellow Americans. Religion had become increasingly and aggressively reformist.

This change in religion and in philanthropy is fundamental to an understanding of the rise and development of the city mission. We can trace its source, at least in part, to two developments at the turn of the century. The first was the great revival enthusiasm which began in the 1790's and continued into the 1830's (the germinal period of the early city missions). In these decades Americans elaborated and increasingly accepted a theology which served to justify the activism this new piety demanded. The second influence in shaping the city mission impulse was the parallel rise of missionary zeal in England during these same years; it was inevitable that Americans should admire and copy the institutional experiments undertaken by English evangelicals.

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Beginning with the late 1780's and 1790's, a wave of revivals swept across frontier America. By the early 1800's, this new religious enthusiasm had spread east, finding converts in every major eastern town and city, completely reshaping the religious life of entire areas in New England and New York State. No longer a rural phenomenon, appealing primarily to uneducated farmers, these revivals converted ministers, prominent merchants and lawyers, college presidents, faculty and students. New York City and Philadelphia experienced significant

revivals. President Timothy Dwight of Yale saved his college, and even his state, from skepticism and the Republicans. Lyman Beecher "sparked" the north shore of Long Island and much of Connecticut, his zeal finding converts even in aristocratic and Unitarian Boston. Few denominations or areas remained unaffected; conservative Scotch Presbyterians from the highlands of Virginia and North Carolina, sophisticated liberals such as Dwight and Nathaniel Taylor of Yale, arminian Methodists, Baptists of all persuasions, even the evangelical wing of the Protestant Episcopal Church felt the impact of these revivals and the urgency of their emphasis upon the conversion experience and the necessity of Christian action.[3]

Church membership grew rapidly; in 1800, church historians have estimated, one person in every fifteen

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[3]William Speer, The Great Revival of 1800 (Philadelphia, 1872); Ashbel Green, Report on the Revival of Religion, 1815 (Philadelphia, 1815); Gardiner Spring, Personal Reminiscences of the Life and Times of Gardiner Spring, Pastor of the Brick Presbyterian Church in the City of New York (2 vols.; New York, 1866); Lyman Beecher, The Autobiography of Lyman Beecher, ed. by Barbara M. Cross (2 vols.; Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1961), Vol. I; Sidney Mead, Nathaniel W. Taylor, 1786-1858 (Chicago, 1942); Charles Keller, The Second Great Awakening in Connecticut (New Haven, 1942); Whitney R. Cross, The Burned-over District, the Social and Intellectual History of Enthusiastic Religion in Western New York, 1800-1850 (Ithaca, New York, 1950); Winthrop S. Hudson, American Protestantism (Chicago, 1961). Concerning these revivals, one of their more prominent converts, New York Presbyterian Gardiner Spring, wrote: "From the time I entered College, in 1800, down to the year 1825, there was an uninterrupted series of these celestial visitations, spreading over different parts of the land. During the whole of these twenty-five years, there was not a month in which we could not point to some village, some city, some seminary of learning, and say: 'Behold what hath God wrought.'" Spring, Reminiscences, I, 160.

had belonged to a Protestant church; by 1835, one out of every eight did. Church membership, given the tremendous rise in population during these years, had far more than doubled. For denominations where statistics exist, the picture is clear-cut. In 1802, 87,000 adults held full membership in Methodist churches. By 1812, the number reached 196,000, and by 1836, 362,000. That same year, Presbyterian membership reached 127,000. By 1834, 641,000 Americans were Methodists, 248,000 Presbyterians.[4]

In the midst and in the wake of these revivals came the organization of countless missionary societies founded specifically to spread God's word to the unbelieving. The duty of those already converted seemed clear enough. "Blest with the light of his truth ourselves," Nathaniel Bowen told the New York Bible and Common Prayer Book Society in 1812, "we are bound to cause it to shine to the utmost possible extent on all who sit in darkness around us. The obligation is too evident to be proved."[5] These hopefully saved Christians sought to reach all those destitute of religion,

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[4]United States, Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, Historical Statistics of the United States, Colonial Times to 1957 (Washington, D. C., 1960), pp. 226-229; Edwin Scott Gaustad, Historical Atlas of Religion in America (New York, 1962), pp. 43, 52, 57, 78, 91. Figures for church membership in pre-1860 America are at best approximate estimations.

[5]Nathaniel Bowen, A Sermon Preached before the Bible and Common Prayer Book Society of New-York, in Trinity Church, March 1, 1812 (New York, 1812), p. 23. This enthusiasm for converting others seemed to affect almost all who felt themselves saved as a result of the Second Great Awakening's wave of revivals.

whether through poverty, indifference, or physical isolation. Their newly founded missionary organizations sent preachers, Bibles and tracts to settlers on the trans-Appalachian frontier, and in Western New York State, where churches and ministers were few, to residents of poorer rural communities along the eastern coast--and to the poor of their own cities. As early as 1796, New York's Calvinists had founded the New York Mission Society to spread the Gospel among America's Indian population and in China. Within the next six years, such varied groups as the Scotch Presbyterians along Pennsylvania's western boundary, eastern theological liberals, and conservative Congregationalists had founded mission societies with the aim of sending ministers and Bibles to the frontier and to poor neighborhoods nearer home.[6]

The missionaries sent out by these societies, however, could not convert an irreligious nation unaided. They depended upon a network of Bible, tract and Sunday school societies to augment their evangelical efforts. In 1809 philanthropic Philadelphians had organized the country's

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[6]The Western Missionary Society was founded by the Pittsburgh Synod in 1802, the Connecticut Missionary Society in 1797 by a combination of liberal Hopkinsians--led by Timothy Dwight--and old-line New England Congregationalists. A similar alliance founded the Massachusetts Missionary Society in 1799. Speer, Great Revival, pp. 79-87; Spring, Reminiscences, I, 241-244, 264-265; Oliver Wendell Elsbree, The Rise of the Missionary Spirit in America, 1790-1815 (Williamsport, Pennsylvania, 1928), Chaps. III and IV; Hudson, American Protestantism, pp. 78-90; Clifford S. Griffin, Their Brothers' Keepers, Moral Stewardship in the United States, 1800-1865 (New Brunswick, New Jersey, 1960), pp. 24-25; Pomerantz, New York, p. 392.

first Bible society to distribute the Scriptures. By 1815, the country had over one hundred Bible societies, and the following year evangelical Christians united to form the American Bible Society. Religious tract societies worked hand in hand with the Bible societies. Through the distribution of cheap, popularly written literature, they hoped to awaken interest in religion among the irreligious and thus prepare the way for their sister missionary and Bible societies. The New York Religious Tract Society, organized in 1812, sent tracts to western New York, Ohio, Tennessee, Kentucky, to poor communities in New Jersey and Rhode Island and even to the frontier lands of Georgia. The Sunday school movement developed at this same time--and for similar purposes. The first Sunday schools in the country were established in the 1790's. By 1824, some 50,000 children were gathered regularly for weekly religious instruction in New England, in the old North-west, throughout the East and even in the slum neighborhoods of Eastern cities. By 1826, the fourteen leading mission, Bible, tract and Sunday school societies had a combined annual income of $361,804.54. They were united by 1828 in an uncompromising crusade against irreligion and indifference.[7]

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[7]For information on the proliferation of Bible, tract, sunday school, missionary and education societies, cf.: Elsbree, Missionary Spirit, Chaps. III and IV; Griffin, Brothers' Keepers, passim; Charles I. Foster, An Errand of Mercy, the Evangelical United Front, 1790-1837 (Chapel Hill, 1960), pp. 105-110, 121-150; John R. Bodo, The Protestant Clergy and Public Issues, 1812-1848 (Princeton, 1954), especially Chaps. 4 and 6.

Enthusiasm and zeal matched the scope of these goals. As a New York Presbyterian minister boasted in 1817: "Institutions multiply for objects as various as the form of human want or woe, a spirit of benevolence pervades society from the palace to the cottage." He and his listeners were indeed fortunate, he felt, to live in "this age of Bibles, this age of missions, this age of mercy to benevolent institutions, this new era of glory to God."[8]

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Americans were not the only ones who worked and prayed for "this new era of glory to God." Indeed the millennial and missionary surge of early nineteenth century America, while rooted in indigenous needs, took much of its institutional direction from an allied evangelical movement which dominated England's religious life during the very years that the Second Great Awakening swept across the United States.

Great Britain, beginning in the 1790's and early 1800's, experienced a revival of religious pietism which, while in many ways quite different from the American revivals, did convert a broad section of English society to a new emotional religion and led them consequently to organize and support countless missionary and reform

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[8]Philip Whelpley, "Address to the New-York Evangelical Society of Young Men," Proceedings of the First Anniversary of the New-York Evangelical Society of Young Men, 1817 (New York, 1817), pp. 12, 15.

societies.[9] "Religion of the heart," "puritanical" morality and a righteous activism became increasingly popular and respectable. The goal of this religious movement, in England as in America, was the conversion of the world to evangelical Protestantism and the remaking of the home society into a nation pure and Christian. As in America, so in England, the leading societies in the Protestant war against irreligion and indifference were the religious tract and Bible societies. In England, the London Religious Tract Society and the British and Foreign Bible Society were particularly influential. They were supported by a host of subsidiary groups, by Sunday school

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[9]The differences between the British Evangelical Movement and the American Second Great Awakening were, of course, great and could be said to be rooted, in part at least, in differences between English and American society generally and between English and American religious institutions specifically. The Evangelical Movement was completely a Church of England affair, with only minimal attempts at an interdenominational approach. Evangelical leaders such as William Wilberforce and Henry Thornton made great efforts not to be labeled as Methodists. In America, the Protestant Episcopal Church played only the smallest role in the Second Great Awakening, which was principally a Methodist-Baptist-Presbygational affair. Theologically the two movements differed as well. The Second Great Awakening in the United States was, initially at least, Calvinistic with Calvinism gradually being "Methodised." In England, the Evangelicals spent much time trying to disavow the mild Calvinism of the early Evangelicals and asserting their theological orthodoxy. Socially and intellectually the movement in each country was directed towards the social needs of the country: in the United States to supplying the frontier with an orthodox Protestantism and with converting the increasingly alien cities to the same religion. In England, the Evangelical Movement attempted to both reform late eighteenth century mores at home and carry British Protestantism to England's far-flung empire.

unions and foreign mission societies, in addition to their own auxiliaries and associations.[10]

Quite early the English Evangelicals sought to convert the poor in their nation's cities. Englishmen, like Americans, anticipated the coming millennium and hoped for the moral and spiritual purification of all in their country. Indeed, far earlier than their American counterparts, English evangelicals turned to the conversion and transformation of their poor into moral, productive, and conservative members of society.[11]

The way to advance the millennium, pious Christians in England and America agreed, was to organize and to join societies. "This is the age of societies," runs the acid comment of Thomas Babington Macaulay. "There is scarcely one Englishman in ten who has not belonged to some association for distributing books, or for prosecuting them; for sending invalids to the hospital, or beggars to the treadmill, for giving plate to the rich, or blankets to the poor." Later in the century, an English novelist described

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[10]For three recent studies of the Evangelical Movement, see: Ford K. Brown, Fathers of the Victorians, the Age of Wilberforce (Cambridge, England, 1952); Standish Meacham, Henry Thornton of Clapham, 1760-1815 (Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1964); Mary G. Jones, Hannah Moore (Cambridge, England, 1952).

[11]Brown, Fathers, pp. 234-284. Some historians have tended to interpret the interest of the English Evangelicals in the poor as essentially a device to ensure social control. For a somewhat extreme statement of this position, one which sees English class attitudes and desire for social control transmitted to the United States and motivating the benevolent movement in this country, see Foster, Errand of Mercy, pp. 82-100.

one day in the life of "Miss Brook," a lady evangelical, a day which remarkably paralleled those spent by her pietistic American sisters.

> And to-day there was the Grey School committee, and the National School to be visited. And Mr. Bentley's new plans for the Sunday School to be talked over with four or five other ladies, and the last private meeting with three or four others to originate a new ladies' association for the discouragement of drunkenness, and the accounts of the Tract Society to be audited, and the reports of the Ladies' District Visiting Club to be drawn up; and, greatest of all, the first meeting of the Ladies' Society for the Conversion of the Irish, which was to be held in the great ball-room at the Bell, and where Mr. Bentley and Mr. Bryant would each make a speech, and perhaps pay a compliment to her 'laborious and energetic offices as secretary,' amidst cries of 'hear!' and the amiable congratulations of female friends to cover her natural confusion. The day was filled up to the brim.[12]

Each organization which Miss Brook belonged to published annual reports, some even monthly or bi-monthly periodicals. These reports were sent not only to outlying areas in England, but to the continent and to the United States as well. Many of America's most important evangelical societies owed their initial guidance and direction to the organizational zeal of England's Clapham Sect. Indeed every prominent American evangelical society--with the exception of the temperance movement--found its progenitor in England: Bible, mission and Sunday school societies, tract distribution societies, city missions, and societies

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[12] [Anonymous], Hawkstone, Bentley's Standard Novels, Vol. XLVI (London, 1845), p. 46, quoted by Brown, Fathers, p. 320. For a list of Evangelical societies active between the 1790's and the 1840's, see Brown, Fathers, pp. 329-340.

to especially train missionaries in the evangelical faith.[13] And none were more anxious to assert this connection than the Americans themselves. Bible, religious tract and Sunday school societies, corresponded actively with English evangelical groups, reprinted lengthy excerpts of the English reports in their own annual reports and felt that they shared with their English brethren in the glorious work which presaged the coming of Christ.[14]

Communications between England and American pietists, however, were not limited to official reports and to the exchange of religious tracts. In New York and indeed throughout the country, reformers had established warm personal contacts with like-thinking Christians in England. Four New Yorkers in particular (beginning in the 1790's and continuing into the 1830's), long personally active in both New York's urban and religious charities, corresponded

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[13] Foster, Errand, pp. 101-118; Brown, Fathers, pp. 270-284; Speer, Great Revival, pp. 70-75.

[14] The New York Religious Tract Society (hereinafter referred to as N.Y.R.T.S.), one of the United States' most active early evangelical and missionary societies, not only claimed the London Religious Tract Society as its inspiration but regularly reprinted lengthy excerpts from the annual reports of the London Tract Society and from the reports of other British and European evangelical societies. Many other American reform societies did likewise. See, for example, the Long Island Bible and Common Prayer Book Society, First Annual Report, 1816 (New York, 1816); The New York Sunday School Union Society, First Report, 1817 (New York, 1817), p. 7; Bowen, Sermon . . . Bible and Common Prayer Book Society, p. 4; Marine Bible Society of New York, Eighth Annual Report (New York, 1824); New York Female Auxiliary Bible Society, Seventh Annual Report (New York, 1823), p. 3.

frequently with English reformers concerning philanthropic and missionary interests.

Isabella Graham, founder of the Society for the Relief of Poor Widows with Small Children, active in many other city charities, corresponded at length with religious men and women in England and her native Scotland. These letters began at the time of her emigration to the United States in 1789 and continued until her death in 1816. She reported and commented upon American revivals, the condition of New York's poor, the progress of the Sunday school movement and her own charitable efforts. The basic subject remained constant, however: how to save sinners? How to live a pure and active Christian life? In 1801, when her daughter, Joanna, and her son-in-law, Divie Bethune, spent a year visiting England and Scotland, they went primarily to meet and exchange religious and charitable views with philanthropists in the British Isles. It was Divie Bethune, indeed, who introduced the religious Sunday school to this country when he moved in the 1780's from Scotland to Philadelphia.[15]

Two New York Quaker philanthropists, Thomas Eddy and John Griscom, also provided important avenues of communication between England and American philanthropists. Thomas Eddy, New York financier, and English Quaker philanthropist Patrick Colquhoun corresponded regularly during roughly the same period that Mrs. Graham did (again, the nascent period

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[15]Graham, Power of Faith, pp. 331, 345-352, 381-385, 390-394.

of the city mission) concerning a broad range of their common interests: reforms in education, Sunday schools, the care of the insane, Bible distribution, the elimination of urban poverty.[16] John Griscom, a Quaker and close friend of Eddy's, acted similarly as an agent in the interchange of European and American ideas concerning education, urban poverty and Bible distribution (and numerous other reform proposals). And like Bethune, Griscom also went to the British Isles for the express purpose of meeting other philanthropists, studying their institutions and exchanging ideas.[17]

These are but a few examples of the ties which united European and especially English religious enthusiasts and their American counterparts. Religious New Yorkers not infrequently visited England to raise money for American philanthropies, as well as to visit and talk. (Somehow, they hoped at the same time to rest and regain physical strength!) John Mitchell Mason and Gardiner Spring, both founders of important American mission societies and both leaders of New York's evangelical world, provide two additional examples.[18]

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[16]Knapp, Eddy, pp. 178-214, 216-230, 248-249, 252-257, 265-267, 270-274, 278-281.

[17]Griscom, Memoir, pp. 101-157, 165-166; John Griscom, A Year in Europe Comprising a Journal of Observations in England, Scotland, Ireland, France, Switzerland, the North of Italy, and Holland. In 1818 and 1819 (2 vols.; New York, 1823).

[18]W. D. Snodgrass, "John Mitchell Mason, D.D.," The Annals of the Pulpit, ed. by William Sprague (9 vols.; New York, 1857-1869), IV, 1; Spring, Reminiscences, II,

The written word, nevertheless, proved the most effective method by which English evangelical ideas and institutions found their way across the ocean. Hannah Moore, Leigh Richmond and William Wilberforce, the prophets and spokesmen of British Evangelism, were read eagerly by pious New Yorkers. Their tracts were spread broadside across the American frontier and among America's urban poor by tract societies and missionary groups; the authors of the Dairyman's Daughter and the Shepherd of Salisbury Plain played as great a role as any American religious leader in inculcating the doctrines of zealous Victorian Protestantism throughout America.

Influencing American philanthropy in yet another way was the Scottish divine, Thomas Chalmers. Chalmers was an influential theologian and a founder of the Scottish National Church; his works had long been popular in New York's Calvinist and Reform circles. But far more influential than his formal doctrinal works were Chalmers' writings on the causes of and remedies for urban poverty. As pastor of city churches, first in Edinburgh and then in Glasgow, Chalmers had been required to assume certain administrative responsibilities in the distribution of poor law funds. His experiences, combined with the memories of the simple social arrangements and unaffected morality of

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96-140; Shepherd Knapp, A History of the Brick Presbyterian Church in the City of New York (New York, 1909), pp. 164-167.

his first rural parish, convinced him that public charity given indiscriminately--and unaccompanied by human interest or concern--served only to debase the poor. Rather than assisting the destitute through such impersonal municipal charities as the almshouse and the workhouse, Chalmers argued, the charitable should divide the city's poorer districts into small sub-sections and appoint a volunteer religious visitor to each. It would be the visitors' task to study the true cause of each family's poverty, encourage, admonish and pray with that family, offering aid only when it was desperately needed. In this way, Chalmers contended, religious philanthropists could transform the urban poor into respectable, church-going members of society. In 1831, Chalmers published his massive and influential treatment of such problems, On the Christian and Economic Polity of a Nation, More Especially with Reference to Its Large Towns. But though charitable New Yorkers began to refer to his writings in the 1820's, his influence upon New York's city missions was greatest in the 1840's and 1850's, when the missions began for the first time to concern themselves exclusively with the temporal and spiritual needs of the poor.[19]

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[19]Thomas Chalmers, Of the Christian and Economic Polity of a Nation, More Especially with Reference to Its Large Towns, in The Works of Thomas Chalmers (25 vols.; Glasgow, 1836-1849). For standard biographies, see William Hanna, Memoirs of the Life and Writings of Thomas Chalmers (3 vols.; Edinburgh, 1852). For examples of Chalmers' American influence, see John Griscom, Year in Europe, II, Chap. 37; Samuel Hanson Cox, Interviews: Memorable and Useful; from Diary and Memory Reproduced (New York, 1853), Chap. I. Cox was to be an ardent supporter of New York's city missions.

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This then was an age of religious enthusiasm and of religious activism, an age of Bibles, tracts and missions. It was an age when missionary and millennial zeal colored virtually every aspect of American life--including urban philanthropy. By 1820, indeed earlier, New Yorkers had begun to give evidence of the influence of missionary enthusiasm upon their approach to urban poverty. Now the most pressing problem seemed the spiritual care of the poor, and the new charitable institutions of the 1820's and 1830's had a decidedly religious cast.

Various factors determined this pattern. A number of New York's oldest and most influential philanthropists were in the forefront of the evangelical movement nationally, giving crucial financial support and leadership to the evangelical societies. The ideas and goals they espoused so enthusiastically on a national level could not but help influence their local and particular charities. And these philanthropists had before them, as we have seen, the example of charitable Englishmen who had directed some of their first missionary activities towards the urban poor. Finally, religious New Yorkers had the impetus of an increasingly millennial persuasion. Pre-millennialists believed that God's second coming waited upon the conversion of all, city artisans, and day laborers as well as merchants and farmers. Thus for many the conversion of the

cities played a pivotal role in their hopes for the imminent perfection of the world.

When and how did pious and philanthropic New Yorkers shift from a limited and essentially pragmatic to an uncompromising and millennial approach to helping the disadvantaged of their city?

This change began gradually during the second decade of the nineteenth century. At first, religious missionaries viewed their activities as a decidedly minor movement within the traditional world of New York philanthropy. They thought of their religious work among the poor as adding a spiritual factor to, but not replacing, older predominantly secular efforts. In their first attempts to save the souls of the poor, they worked carefully, as we shall see, within the framework of existing institutions.[20] Yet there was always strong pressure to broaden their religious approach, to adopt the methods and scope of the evangelical movement. Eventually these pressures created the city mission movement. The early history of the Society

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[20]The distinction between the secular and religious, which we in the twentieth century tend to see as clear-cut, did not appear so sharply drawn early in the nineteenth century. It might indeed be argued that respectable churchgoing Americans of the early 1800's could not conceive of an area of behavior not influenced and guided by religious principles. Thus such ostensibly secular charities as the N.Y.S.R.P.W.S.C.--even the Public School Society--assumed that they had a responsibility to instruct the poor, especially children, in religious truths. Like the English evangelicals, they saw their fundamental purpose not simply in feeding, clothing, or educating the poor, but in the creation of a truly religious and moral person.

for Supporting the Gospel Among the Poor of New York, a transitional organization linking the older secular charity with the newer pattern of mission work, illustrates clearly these pressures and the gradual changes they brought about in outlook and method.

The Society for Supporting the Gospel Among the Poor of the City of New York was founded in December, 1812, to maintain a chaplain in the city's eleemosynary institutions--in the prisons, almshouse and city hospital. Until this time, neither the city nor the state had appointed a chaplain to care for the souls incarcerated in these institutions. Religious New Yorkers, many of them quite active in the city's secular charities, organized to remedy this neglect. In part their concern was a consequence of increasing zealousness in religion. But in 1813 even pious philanthropists still thought of religious charity in limited terms; they did not expect their chaplain to be a missionary to all the poor of the city, or that he should seek to promote a general religious revival as frontier missionaries and later city missionaries did. He was to function solely as a religious appendage to established secular institutions. As the Society's missionary, he conducted regular religious services for the inmates of the prisons, almshouse and city hospital, distributed Bibles, and religious tracts, prayed with the penitent and dying, and when possible organized Bible reading and prayer groups. All these efforts were to be limited to the inmates of the city's public institutions. The missionary was not, despite

the organization's name, to visit the poor generally, or even oversee the religious development of those whom he had known in a public institution, once they were released from it.[21]

Yet the growing impetus of the Second Great Awakening, with its emphasis on conversion, increasingly influenced the Society. This was an age when ministers courted revivals among their congregation, when they were judged both by fellow clergymen and earnest laymen in terms of the number of conversions they had gained and the number of revivals they had led. The missionaries and the younger members of the Society for Supporting the Gospel could not help judging themselves and their Society in these terms. Certainly the two chaplains employed by the Society between 1813 and 1834 did not think of their work as simply a formal offering of religious services to the uninterested and unfortunate. The Reverend Ezra Stiles Ely and his successor, John Stanford, both viewed themselves as true missionaries and sought actively to convert the irreligious and indifferent. Although they were forced to limit their ministry to the inmates of public institutions, within this restricted field they adopted evangelical methods surprisingly similar to those of the frontier missionary, and not unlike those

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[21]Society for Supporting the Gospel Among the Poor of the City of New York (hereinafter referred to as S.S.G.P.), First Report of the Trustees, reprinted, Ezra Stiles Ely, Visits of Mercy, II, 178-180; S.S.G.P., Annual Reports, II-IV, 1815-1817 (New York, 1815-1817).

later adopted by the highly evangelical followers of Lyman Beecher and Charles Grandison Finney. They visited the penitent or the dying inmate frequently, and did not rest until they had convinced him of his sinfulness and impending damnation. Then, while the sinner was in the throes of despair, Stanford or Ely would point to the promises of Christ and the hope of salvation through His death. The sinner "with a gasp of relief" often threw himself on Christ's mercy--then experienced God's saving grace and felt himself to be among God's elect. Ely or Stanford would then carefully record another conversion to the eternal credit of their institution.[22]

Like the annual reports of later evangelical city missions, their reports were filled with accounts of death-bed conversions and of the prayerful agonies and resultant conversions of former atheists and indifferent Christians. This, not simply the holding of perfunctory Sunday services, was the true aim of their ministry as they and the Society came to see it.[23] Aided in their evangelical labors by

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[22]Ezra Stiles Ely's diary for thennearly three years of his chaplaincy was reprinted as Visits of Mercy. Such conversion accounts are liberally sprinkled throughout, as they are in the diary John Stanford kept during a much more lengthy service as chaplain. The Stanford diary is reprinted in large part in Charles G. Sommers, Memoir of the Reverend John Stanford, D.D., Late Chaplain to the Humane and Criminal Institutions in the City of New York (New York, 1835). The manuscript diary, which is only a little more complete than the printed one, is deposited in the Manuscript Division, New York Historical Society.

[23]The second, third and fourth annual reports of the Society, 1815-1817, for example, consist almost entirely of such accounts.

such members of the Society as Leonard Bleecker, Divie Bethune and Anson G. Phelps (all deeply evangelical Christians and all later active supporters of the city mission movement), they strove with even greater intensity to save the souls of all found in the city's institutions.[24] It was but a short step for evangelical Christians to seek the conversion of the poor throughout the city.

And such a step, in the years after 1812, became ever more imminent as the missionary and millennial zeal of the Second Great Awakening began to affect all aspects of American philanthropy. Sunday schools, for example, became increasingly religious in emphasis and threatened to approach and even supersede general free education in popular support and esteem.[25] The numbers and earnestness of the volunteer Sunday school teachers increased; more and more, their classes assumed the atmosphere of a prayer meeting, the teachers concerned not so much with general religious education as with the immediate conversion of their charges.[26] During these same years the evangelical impulse overtook yet another traditional area of American philanthropy: the nation's sailors. Previously Americans had been

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[24]S.S.G.P., First Report of the Trustees.

[25]See, for instance, the comments of John Pintard to his daughter, May 4, 1818, Letters, I, 119.

[26]New York Sunday School Union Society, First Annual Report (New York, 1817); Samuel B. Halliday, Winning Souls, Sketches and Incidents during Forty Years of Pastoral Work (New York, 1873), pp. 53-56.

concerned about sailors unemployed during the winter, or with the dependents of those injured or lost at sea. With the second decade of the nineteenth century, however, the religious conversion of America's "floating population" assumed an ever greater importance in the minds of the philanthropic. Societies were founded in New York and other eastern ports to distribute Bibles and tracts to sailors, to support missionaries among them, and finally to build a free chapel explicitly for their use. It was hoped not only to convert sailors and thus raise their moral level and increase their on-the-job efficiency, but also to use them as missionaries for American Protestantism throughout the world, wherever their vessels sailed.[27]

Finally, in 1816, the very year that the American Bible Society was organized and a few months after the American Education Society was established, New Yorkers founded three separate organizations which brought religion to the poor of their own city. These were the Young Men's Missionary Society of New York, the New York Evangelical Missionary Society of Young Men, and the Female Missionary Society for the Poor of New York. Influenced by their own

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[27]Marine Bible Society of New York, Constitution of the Marine Bible Society of New York, Auxilliary to the American Bible Society; together with an address to Merchants and Masters of Vessels, and an address to seamen (New York, 1817); The Mariner's Church. A Meeting of Merchants and Others Connected with the Commerce of the Port of New York, held on the 29th May, 1818, for the Purpose of Adopting Measures for Supplying Seamen with the Preaching of the Gospels (New York, 1818).

evangelical zeal, certain of the more pious among New York's charitable had come to feel that religion could provide a meaningful solution to the needs of the urban poor. As the language of their reports, their aims, and activities demonstrates, these societies were an integral part of the Second Great Awakening's missionary and millennial enthusiasm.

Yet pietism was not the only influence upon these institutions and their founders. The very fact that New Yorkers began to think of their own city as a missionary field, and of its poorer inhabitants as subjects to be converted, indicates as well that a great distance, both physical and social, was coming to exist between New York's poor and her pious and respectable citizens--a distance so great that religious New Yorkers felt the need to adopt institutional methods to cross it, methods modeled after those they had used when seeking the conversion of "heathen" Africans or the American Indian. Thus these three early organizations, although short-lived and devoting only a small proportion of their efforts to city mission work, would interact to establish the long-lived and broadly based religious charities which we call city missions.

Until 1816, the Young Men's Missionary Society of New York had functioned simply as a fund-raising auxiliary of the New York Mission Society. But that year, its increased membership and financial resources led its officers to break away from the parent organization and undertake an

independent missionary program. Within two years of this decision, the Society supported twelve missionaries along a vast frontier area, one which included new agricultural settlements in Illinois, Alabama and western New York State, and older isolated counties in northeastern Pennsylvania and western Virginia. They held Sunday services, baptised and married, established churches, organized Sunday schools and distributed Bibles and tracts, seeking everywhere to counteract the infidelity and irreligion that seemed inevitably to accompany frontier life. But the underlying hope of the Society was that their ministers would be able to extend the revival fervor to their particular mission area. The Young Men's Missionary Society of New York was thus similar to the many other missionary groups which had sprung up in eastern cities to supply the needs of frontier and rural America.[28]

One of their missionaries, however, did not travel by horseback along the frontier, but rather sought his converts among the dank and crowded tenements of New York's Corlear's Hook. As early as October, 1817--indeed perhaps as much as a year and a half earlier--the Society chose one of New York's oldest slums as a mission field. Here their missionaries visited from tenement to tenement, distributed tracts and Bibles, and held Sunday services whenever they

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[28]The Young Men's Missionary Society of New York (hereinafter referred to as Y.M.M.S.N.Y.), Third Annual Report, December, 1818 (New York, 1819), pp. 1-15.

could find a room. During his first two months at Corlear's Hook, Reverend John Miller, the Society's first missionary, visited 97 families "in the abodes of ignorance, poverty and distress"--and during his first six months, made 237 such visits to the poor, distributing Bibles and tracts. Miller established a Sunday school which met in a rented room on Henry Street and preached regularly at a house on Norfolk Street. By the time he relinquished his mission, the Reverend Miller claimed a congregation of three to four hundred persons. By 1817, the Society, encouraged by this enthusiastic response, constructed a free mission chapel on the north side of Broome Street, between Lewis and Cannon streets, in the heart of Corlear's Hook--in the center, that is, of the missionary's established field of operations.[29]

It is a significant comment upon the social attitudes and values of middle-class religious New Yorkers that while the activities of the Society's rural and urban missionaries seem remarkably similar, the expectations the Society held of their two different mission fields were quite dissimilar. The Young Men's Missionary Society sent its missionaries to the frontier in the hopes that they would foster revivals among those rural settlers, converting hundreds, changing the tone and character of frontier society. They believed and expected that between God's grace and their efforts,

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[29]Ibid., pp. 16-18. This annual report implies that they had employed a city missionary as early as 1816, perhaps earlier.

these crude, perhaps irreligious farmers could be transformed into zealous and respectable Christians.[30]

But not so the subjects of their urban mission. Far from hoping to remake Corlear's Hook into a respectable God-fearing community, the Society, in their third annual report, explicitly rejected the hope that a widespread revival would result from the labors of their city missionary. They implied that most of the long-time inhabitants of this slum were beyond the reach of saving grace; in annual reports, they questioned the validity of the few conversions recorded by their missionaries. These missionaries, the Society formally stated in 1818, could supply the religious needs of Christians whom misfortune had reduced to a life at Corlear's Hook, they could give basic religious attention to the sick and dying, and--of far-reaching importance--establish Sunday schools so that the youthful inhabitants of this slum might be exposed while still impressionable to religious influences and thus raised gradually as Christians. But they could not expect to convert the "vicious" poor nor bring a general sense of religious zeal and immediacy to so "degraded" and unlikely a locale.[31]

These explicitly circumscribed goals indicate, as well, the delimiting influence which the older, secular

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[30] Ibid., p. 3.

[31] Ibid., p. 16.

legacy continued to exert. The evangelical movement had yet to transform religious urban charity into a missionary and millennial force which sought to remake the spiritual life of the city. Rather these proto-city missions were more the religious counterparts of the older, more secular charities, serving a limited field, providing more religious and moral guidance than spiritual regeneration.

At the very time that its missionary efforts were proving so successful, the Young Men's Missionary Society was rent by a bitter schism which saw a large number of members secede and form a rival missionary society, the New York Evangelical Missionary Society of Young Men. The Young Men's Missionary Society of New York was under the leadership of many of New York's most orthodox Calvinists: the Reverends James M. Mathews, Robert B. E. McLeod, John Romeyn and Alexander McClelland, among the clergy, and John D. Keese and Guysbert B. Vroom, among the laity.[32] But the Society had originally included many of the liberal or New England wing of the Presbyterian church. These "liberals" were strongly influenced in their theology by the writings of Samuel Hopkins and other congregational liberals, including even Timothy Dwight of Yale and the young Lyman Beecher.[33] The leader of these New York

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[32] Ibid., pp. 25-28. The third annual report has four lengthy pages listing officers and members. Cf. Spring, Reminiscences, I, 247-249.

[33] For the standard discussion of Samuel Hopkins and his influence upon American Protestantism, see Joseph Haroutunian, Piety Versus Moralism, the Passing of the New England Theology

Hopkinsians was Gardiner Spring, minister of the highly respectable Brick Presbyterian Church. (Spring himself, as a young man, had worked as a missionary to the city's poor.) In 1817, Spring and his sympathizers within the Society proposed that the Society appoint the Reverend Samuel H. Cox, a theological student of Spring's, as their missionary to Corlear's Hook.[34] The orthodox Presbyterian leaders of the Young Men's Missionary Society, however, blocked Cox's appointment, protesting that the young clergyman held heretical views concerning man's innate depravity and the agency of human means in securing conversions. The Hopkinsians then appealed the matter to the parent society, the New York Mission Society, only to be again defeated; Gardiner Spring was himself accused of heresy and brought to trial before the New York Synod.

In the spring of 1817, Gardiner Spring and other liberal Calvinists left the Young Men's Missionary Society

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(New York, 1932). Cf. H. Shelton Smith, Changing Conceptions of Original Sin (New York, 1955), especially Chap. I; Cross, "Introduction," Beecher, Autobiography; William G. McLoughlin, "Pietism and the American Character," American Quarterly, XVII (Summer, 1965); Edwards A. Park, "Memoir," The Works of Samuel Hopkins, D.D., First Pastor of the Church in Great Barrington, Mass., Afterwards Pastor of the First Congregational Church in Newport, R.I., with a Memoir of his Life and Character, ed. by Sewall Harding (3 vols.; Boston, 1865), I, 1-266.

[34]For a recent analysis of Gardiner Spring's theology, see William Russell Hoyt, "The Religious Thought of Gardiner Spring, with Particular Reference to his Doctrine of Sin and Salvation" (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Duke University). For a biographical sketch of Samuel H. Cox, see the Dictionary of American Biography and Cox, Interviews.

to form their own missionary group. Their choice of both the term "Evangelical" for their title and of Cox as their city missionary proclaimed their theological revolt from established Presbyterianism in New York.[35]

Despite these doctrinal altercations, however, the New York Evangelical Missionary Society of Young Men adopted a missionary program remarkably similar to the Young Men's Missionary Society. The Evangelical Missionary Society sent ministers to work in northeastern Pennsylvania, in Genesee County, New York, and to "still more undefined and extended desolations in the State of Georgia." Its function was "the salvation of dying men."[36] Clearly, at least some of the officers and active members of the Society felt that their efforts were part of a great millennial war against atheism and irreligion. Certainly such was the opinion of the Reverend Philip M. Whelpley, pastor of the First Presbyterian Church and a leader of the liberal Hopkinsian wing of New York's Presbyterian Church. Referring to the Evangelical Missionary Society's first annual report, Whelpley wrote:

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[35]Spring, Reminiscences, I, 248-249; New-York Evangelical Missionary Society of Young-Men (hereinafter referred to as N.Y.E.M.S.Y.M.) [Gardiner Spring], A Brief View of the Facts which Gave Rise to the New-York Evangelical Society of Young Men, Together with their Constitution (New York, 1817); N.Y.E.M.S.Y.M., Proceedings of the First Anniversary of the New-York Evangelical Missionary Society (New York, 1817), p. 3; Shepherd Knapp, Brick, pp. 243-244.

[36]N.Y.E.M.S.Y.M., Proceedings of First Anniversary, pp. 3, 17.

> I consider this report as holding a place among the numerous and decisive proofs, which the present day affords, that a revolution in the intellectual and moral state of man has begun, and is rapidly advancing to its crisis;--a revolution, in which hope is assurance,--experiment is success,--and contest is victory. What though the struggle between light and darkness be severe and protracted;--what though the lightnings of heaven and the flames of hell alternately narrow and extend the scene of conflict, yet truth and holiness shall triumph--JESUS SHALL REIGN. . . . Hail! Millennial glory![37]

And like the Young Men's Missionary Society, they also sent missionaries to the city slums: one to the Negro ghetto around Bancker Street, another to Corlear's Hook. Here they preached Sundays, held weekday services, organized Sunday schools and, most importantly, regularly visited the poor in their homes. Indeed, by 1817, those involved in city mission work had come to believe that systematic visiting among the poor in their homes was

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[37]Philip M. Whelpley, "Address," N.Y.E.M.S.Y.M., Proceedings of First Anniversary, p. 21. The Reverend Whelpley was pastor of New York's First Presbyterian Church until his death in 1824. He was an ardent supporter of revivals, missions, and a believer in the imminence of the millennium. He was a close friend and co-worker of Gardiner Spring and seems to have held similar opinions in regard to missions, revivals and human efficacy. Whelpley, A Sermon Delivered in the Murray Street Church, New-York, in behalf of the United Foreign Missionary Society, May 11, 1823 (New York, 1823), pp. 7, 15-20; Spring, A Funeral Sermon Occasioned by the Death of the Rev. Philip Malanchthon Whelpley, Pastor of the First Presbyterian Church in the City of New-York, preached in that church on the 26th day of July, 1824, together with an address delivered at his funeral (New York, 1824).

"an exercise indispensable to the success of a mission among the poor."[38]

Thus respectable church-going New Yorkers in the years following the War of 1812 had demonstrated an active concern for the souls of the urban poor. But this was not a solicitude felt for the spiritual needs of neighbors and equals. Even more than the Young Men's Missionary Society, the language of the Evangelical Missionary Society shows that its officers and missionaries thought of the poor as an alien and hostile group, in some ways more akin to the American Indian or the inhabitants of Africa and Asia than to their church-going fellow citizens. Indeed, work among the destitute and criminal slum population of New York, the Society reported in 1818, is necessarily accompanied by more deprivation and greater self-denial than the usual routine of duty on our frontier settlements.[39]

How and why did conservative, respectable New Yorkers become involved in visiting and supporting work among the degraded and criminal dwellers in their city's worst slums? The most apparent reason lies in a changed perception of New York's less privileged citizens; the poor, by 1818, were

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[38]N.Y.E.M.S.Y.M., Proceedings of the First Anniversary, pp. 3-5. By 1818, the Society's city mission work had assumed primary importance in their eyes. In their Second Annual Report, December 6, 1818 (New York, 1818), pp. 45-49, the Society gave the reports of their city missionaries a far more prominent place than that accorded the reports of their rural missionaries.

[39]N.Y.E.M.S.Y.M., Proceedings of the First Anniversary, pp. 4-5, 17.

becoming a numerous, to a few even an alarming problem. Gardiner Spring, corresponding secretary of the New York Evangelical Missionary Society, reported that the Society had been horrified to discover that the unchurched of New York numbered over five thousand in 1817. He went on to refer to them as "this portion of the heathen world." More striking is the vocabulary used by that optimistic millennialist, Philip Whelpley. "If you wish to see the poor as they are," he informed the Evangelical Missionary Society in 1817,

> go into the streets and highways of this city . . . accompany your missionary from house to house: what forms of misery--what depths of ignorance--what extremes of moral degradation will you not behold! Where children in multitudes grow up in vice sufficient to curtain the heavens with sack cloth; and in ignorance sufficient to give perpetuity to crime and eternity to guilt, where parents, shameless and hopeless, by precept and example, bid their youngsters 'God-speed' to hell: where the aged, dark and comfortless, without a glow of unearthly feeling, . . . set their foot into the grave![40]

Yet the millennial expectations of Whelpley and many of his fellow liberal Presbyterians were such that they did not despair of removing the "sack-cloth" from heaven and saving the children, if not the adults, of Bancker Street and Corlear's Hook. Although Whlpley's rhetoric was undoubtedly a sincere expression of his feelings and formed one aspect of religious New Yorkers' view of their city's poor, the Society

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[40] [Gardiner Spring], "Report of the Board of Managers," N.Y.E.M.S.Y.M., Proceedings of the First Anniversary, p. 5; Whelpley, "Address," N.Y.E.M.S.Y.M., Proceedings of the First Anniversary, p. 18.

was still able to look objectively and rationally at this slum population and seek methods of bringing it within the Christian fold. The poor were often irreligious, Theodore Dwight informed the Society's members at their 1819 annual meeting, not because of innate depravity but because they had never received religious education, could not afford the pew rents in respectable churches, and were prevented by their shoddy clothes and appearance from attending even those few churches which provided free pews. They accumulated in drunken, disorderly mobs on Sundays because they lived in crowded neighborhoods where none could attend church. "Let them," he concluded in a tone of committed optimism,

> be informed that a church is erected for their appropriate benefit, and that means of religious instruction are furnished to them, they must feel a strong inducement to enter the one and enjoy the other.[41]

Thus an ambivalent attitude characterized church-going New Yorkers' attitudes towards the unchurched of their slums. These tenement dwellers seemed sufficiently alien to appeal to the taste for the "exotic" of a millennial period, yet

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[41]Whelpley, in the same address in which he castigated the adult poor and predicted a doleful future for their offspring, still assumed that his Society and their two missionaries could reverse this picture. "In the zeal for the salvation of dying men which this Report exhibits," he said in a characteristically millennial fashion, "I behold the promise of . . . golden years! I behold the first fruits of pure, rational, vital, heaven-born Christianity." Whelpley, "Address," N.Y.E.M.S.Y.M., Proceedings of the First Anniversary, p. 21; Timothy Dwight, "Address," N.Y.E.M.S.Y.M., Proceedings of the First Anniversary, p. 23.

still not so alien as to categorically repulse the respectable in their efforts to save and transform them.

Certainly the Female Missionary Society for the Poor of New York, a third early nineteenth century city mission, shared this attitude of concern and optimism. In 1818, after three years of labor among the same inhabitants of Bancker Street and Corlear's Hook, the Society spoke of their work in "this wilderness of sin."

> And what though no children are made to pass through the fire into Moloch, what though no widow shrieks on the funeral pile; multitudes are reeling to and fro in consequence of the intoxicating draught; multitudes are dancing . . . unconscious of the awful destruction that awaits them. Almost every species of vice and iniquity prevail.

But, the Society's officers quickly added: "Shall we see them rushing to the precipice . . . without making the most vigorous efforts to reclaim them? God has promised to give his Son the Heathen for his inheritance, . . . and are there not some among the destitute of our own city for whom Christ died?"[42] Clearly the Society felt there were.

The origins and activities, as well as the social attitudes, of this women's group, parallel those of the two early city missions we have already discussed. The Female Mission Society for the Poor of New York had originally been a female auxiliary of the New York Bible Society, like the Young Men's Missionary Society, devoted principally

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[42] Female Missionary Society for the Poor of the City of New-York and its Vicinity (hereinafter referred to as F.M.S.), Second Annual Report (New York, 1818), p. 5.

to raising money for this general evangelical society and to the general distribution of Bibles. But the zeal and immediacy of the missionary movement impelled them into more direct and active work. "The managers and members of the Female Bible Society," they explained in 1817, "have actually commenced work. Not satisfied with aiding, by their funds and approbation, the parent and other Bible institutions, nor with purchasing Bibles and depositing them in the usual manner, they have entered the habitations of the poor--have sought out the destitute, and with their own hand, have given them the word of life."[43]

The ladies had originally thought simply to establish Sunday schools at Corlear's Hook and Bancker Street and to hire a missionary to supervise them. This missionary, Ward Stafford, and the ladies who assisted him in the Sunday school soon found themselves visiting the homes of their Sunday school scholars, and then venturing out more systematically throughout their mission field. "By this means," Stafford reported, "I have had the opportunity to address . . . thousands, who had never before seen a minister within their dwelling, and many who had never seen one in the house of God." By the end of his first year's ministry Stafford had collected between four and six hundred children into Sunday schools and preached regularly

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[43]Ward Stafford, New Missionary Field, A Report to the Female Missionary Society for the Poor of the City of New-York and its Vicinity, at their Quarterly Prayer Meeting, March, 1817 (2d ed.; New York, 1817), pp. 23-24.

to the unchurched in a room near the ship yards at Corlear's Hook.[44]

Even more importantly, Stafford had formulated a thoroughgoing program of active visiting and philanthropy for the Female Missionary Society. In his first report, Stafford urged the immediate construction of free chapels throughout New York's poorer neighborhoods and the formation, as well, of ward committees of ladies. These volunteer committees, Stafford wrote, should systematically visit in the city's slum neighborhoods, distributing tracts and Bibles, ascertaining the religious state of the families visited, and their temporal needs as well.[45]

Stafford was convinced that religious and temporal charity must work hand in hand if the poor of New York were to be converted and brought into the Christian churches. He insisted, as the ladies themselves had already come to suspect, that it was not enough to deposit Bibles at specific locations throughout the city and expect the poor to take them, read them, and convert themselves. Such passive methods could never be successful. Christians must seek out the poor in their homes, bringing them Bibles and praying with them. And, Stafford added, "Particular pains should be taken to approach the destitute, especially the vicious, in times of affliction. Places inaccessible to Christians at

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[44]F.M.S., Second Annual Report, pp. 5-7; Stafford, New Missionary Field, pp. 3-4, 11.

[45]Stafford, New Missionary Field, pp. 29-31.

other times are then approached with perfect ease." The ladies of the ward committees should offer temporal aid, clothing, food for the sick and the hungry, and jobs for the unemployed. Even in the case of less desperate need, Stafford urged, wise housekeepers could advise the poor on efficient methods of buying and preparing food, making clothes, and preparing for the hard times of the winter. "To manage their temporal concerns to advantage many need information, advice and direction, which without the least difficulty, might be given by a kind and judicious neighbor." In this way the Female Missionary Society might win the confidence of the poor, bridge the gulf which existed between the respectable and the destitute, and gradually bring these unfortunates within the fold of their Sunday schools and mission chapel.[46]

During the next few years the ladies appeared to follow Stafford's advice. In October, 1818, they dedicated their first mission chapel on Bancker Street and with funds supplied by the Berkshire Mission Society hired a second city missionary to care for this area.[47] The following year, Ward Stafford and the Female Society helped establish a second mission church, the Allen Street Presbyterian

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[46] Ibid., pp. 30-32.

[47] This is the first example I have found of a rural missionary or evangelical group helping to establish and support a city mission. Yet by the 1840's and 1850's the pattern becomes quite common and can be seen as part of the American assumption that the city was peculiarly in need of such pious attentions.

Church, which received the Society's support until 1827. The Society's Sunday schools expanded, and Stafford continued his visiting at Corlear's Hook. After five years, Stafford's normal routine found him holding three services weekly at the Bancker Street Chapel, occasional lectures in private homes, weekly prayer meetings, visiting the sick and dying and giving one weekday evening lecture at the mission church. Members of the Society, both men and women, continued to systematically visit the poor in their homes, conduct Sunday school classes and a weekly Bible class.[48]

But neither this activity nor Stafford's proposals for temporal charity meant that the ladies and their missionary were any more sympathetic towards the poor than Gardiner Spring, Philip Whelpley or the Young Men's Missionary Society had been. "Almost all the sufferings of the poor in this and other cities," Stafford asserted in 1817, "are the immediate effect of ignorance or vice."[49] At other times the Society, in its official reports, referred to the "vicious" poor or to their "desperate depravity." And at all times Stafford, the Society, and its subsequent missionaries viewed

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[48]F.M.S., Second Annual Report, p. 4; F.M.S., Fifth Annual Report (New York, 1821), passim; E. H. Gillett, History of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America (2 vols.; rev. ed.; Philadelphia, 1864), p. 253.

[49]Stafford, New Missionary Field, p. 42. At the same time, Stafford cautioned the ladies not to encourage pauperism with their charity. They should, he warned, aid only sparingly and with discrimination so as not to weaken self-reliance and independence.

the poor as alien heathen somehow grown up in the heart of a Christian city. "They are not in the habit of reading anything," Stafford told the Society in a tone of bewilderment. "Most of them are entirely separated from the religious community . . . ." At one time Stafford reported he had met a young girl, born and raised in New York City, who had never seen a Bible, heard of God, and when asked if she had a soul, vigorously denied it. Yet, Stafford stated, her case was in no way unique. "Large numbers of people have arrived to middle and even to old age, in a condition but little better." And where ignorance and irreligion existed, so did crime, vice, and misery. These ignorant souls inspired sympathy, but the thought of their numbers and their certain multiplication brought horror and fear as well to the mind of the Female Missionary Society's first minister.

> Here, then, we have a great mass of people almost entirely beyond the restraints of religion, among whom are interspersed thousands who are grossly vicious. Multitudes are yet uncontaminated, especially of the rising generation; but vice is spreading like contagion; the leaven of sin is extending to the whole mass, and if unresisted, will reduce the whole to a mass of corruption.[50]

The ladies and their missionaries had thus two distinct, yet they felt complementary, goals. By converting and thus socializing the uneducated and irreligious, they would both save individual souls and preserve the stability of New York's Christian and respectable society. That conversion

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[50]Ibid., pp. 22, 11, 17; F.M.S., Second Annual Report, p. 5; F.M.S., Fifth Annual Report, pp. 8-9.

would bring with it prosperity and respect for authority seemed too apparent to be questioned.

These three organizations did not survive the 1830's and had little influence in other American cities. But in origin and aims they foreshadowed the varied influences which led a few years later to the formation of more permanent and influential city missions. Their histories, especially that of the Female Missionary Society, demonstrate as well how easily concern for the salvation of the poor led to the distribution of temporal charity--a route all later city missions were to follow.

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But if we intend to use the city mission as a mirror for the social history of the middle period, a narrowly institutional study of the missions will leave crucial questions unanswered--and indeed unasked. Thus we cannot, for example, completely understand the relationship of this institution to the Second Great Awakening by simply pointing out their chronological coincidence. If we claim that social reform in the middle period generally, and from our point of view, the city missions specifically, owed its inception to the religious enthusiasm of the Second Great Awakening, we must examine at least briefly the theology of Americans active in the reform movement and in particular in city mission work.

What impelled New Yorkers to devote time, money, and energy towards the conversion of the unchurched? And to do so with a sense of urgency and enthusiasm? The New Yorkers who had founded these first city missions were orthodox Calvinists, some of them rigid Scotch Presbyterians. Formally they accepted the Calvinist doctrines of predestination and of total human depravity. Every man, orthodox Calvinists believed, deserved the punishments of hell, and nothing any man did could effect his own salvation. Yet God, they believed, in His benevolence determined to save some sinners. These souls, He infused with grace, reawakening their fallen nature. Overwhelmed by this flood of grace, seeing themselves and God for the first time with new reason and understanding, this blessed minority threw themselves upon God's mercy and were saved. Calvin likened this experience to God raping the soul. God, not man, Calvinists of all shades argued, was the prime and sole mover in conversion, acting from motives awful and unknowable.

God had determined from the beginning of time the saved and the damned. Why, then, establish missions to convert sinners? Did orthodox Calvinist founders of New York's mission societies, men such as John Mitchell Mason and John Romeyn, or even Gardiner Spring or Ezra Stiles Ely, believe that God needed them to help effect His salvation of certain sinners? Yet if logic denied them a role in the salvation of men, why the compulsion, not only to distribute Bibles and support missionaries, but also to gain immediate converts

during revival meetings? Why the feeling that upon the sum of their individual efforts rested the advent of the millennium?

Most religious organizations in the early years of the Second Great Awakening entertained quite modest views of the success they might achieve. "The operation of the Bible," the Massachusetts Bible Society characteristically reported in 1814,

> is necessarily gradual and noiseless. Its province is the heart, and its best fruits are those mild and humble virtues, which ask no notice but from the eye of God. Striking effects cannot therefore be related, and ought not to be expected. It is enough to know, that we have sown the good seed of divine truth, and we may leave it with confidence to HIM, whose grace descends as the dew . . .[51]

Quite a different tone began to appear, however, in the years after the close of the War of 1812. In 1818, for example, the Young Men's Missionary Society of New York, organized by New York's most orthodox Scotch Presbyterians, wrote in a new spirit of the activities of their missionaries along the frontier:

> Others are now on their way to aid the Lord against the mighty. Many precious souls, it is hoped, have, through their instrumentality, been rescued from the power of the prince of darkness, and have received an inheritance among those who are sanctified through faith in Jesus Christ.[52]

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[51]Bible Society of Massachusetts, Report of the Executive Committee of the Bible Society of Massachusetts, prepared for the Anniversary of the Society, June 2, 1814 (Boston, 1814), p. 4.

[52]Y.M.M.S.N.Y., Third Annual Report, p. 3.

That same year the Female Missionary Society for the Poor of the City of New York and its Vicinity wrote in their annual report:

> God has promised to give his Son the Heathen for his inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for his possession; and are there not some among the destitute of our own city for whom Christ died? Some elect who must yet be gathered in? The very circumstance that God hath put it into the hearts of his people to erect a house for public worship in so vicious a part of our city, argues a strong probability that he hath some souls there that must be sought out.[53]

Both God and the conversion experienced had seemingly changed. The God of these zealous Christians was not the God of Calvin acting with arbitrary and inscrutable power upon powerless man, but rather a God that must await the voluntary actions of a group of respectable Christians to gather in those He had willed to save. And Christians too had changed. Within these few years they had suddenly seemed to gain a power sufficient to help save their fellow sinners.

William G. McLoughlin, an eminent historian of religion in America, recently suggested that

> in the evangelistic fervor engendered by the [First Great] Awakening pietists of all kinds gradually abandoned the emphasis on a limited atonement and worked their way toward the doctrines of free will, free grace and immediate salvation open to all men. By the end of the eighteenth century the unique American systems of itinerant evangelism and mass revivalism had evolved to provide the techniques for regenerating a whole society (and through missions, the whole world).[54]

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[53] F.M.S., Second Annual Report, p. 5.

[54] William G. McLoughlin, "Pietism," p. 168.

This "evangelization" of Calvinism has been traced by Church historians in the thought and writings of a few prominent liberal theologians.[55] Scholars have less frequently suggested, however, that the Second Great Awakening and its revivalistic zeal affected in a similar manner the religious beliefs of orthodox Calvinists generally--and that it did so as early as the second decade of the nineteenth century.

Certainly this was the case among pious New Yorkers. Even among those who considered themselves most orthodox, man's ability seemed increasingly important; God seemed increasingly willing to help those who would help themselves and others in finding a way to salvation. New Yorkers began to place greater and greater emphasis upon the technique and significance of sanctification. The experience of grace was only a first step, indispensable though it may have been, to a life of pious activism. One might indeed, with no more than the minimum amount of distortion necessarily created by such schematic interpretations, regard all of American theology between Samuel Hopkins and Charles G. Finney as a constant search for forms in which to express and justify the generation's increasingly unavoidable commitment to evangelical action.[55a]

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[55]For example, see Sidney Mead's biography, Nathaniel W. Taylor, Barbara Cross's "Introduction," Beecher, Autobiography, and McLoughlin, Modern Revivalism.

[55a]See Appendix B for a detailed account of this gradual development in the lives and writings of five representative and influential New Yorkers.

Both in terms of personal influence and ideas, Charles G. Finney was a genuine culmination of this impulse; not surprisingly, he was a major influence both personally and intellectually in the shaping of New York's first permanent city missions.

In the winter of 1834-1835, while pastor of the Chatham Street Chapel, Finney gave a series of sermons on revivals. His object was, in part, to inspire an immediate revival in New York City, and in part to state clearly his religious and methodological beliefs. He succeeded in both.[56]

In one sense Charles Finney seemed merely to be appropriating some of the tenets of Hopkinsian liberalism (such as Man's natural ability to know and serve God) and forcing them to their logical conclusions. Salvation, Finney insisted in the very first lecture of his winter revival series, was not a miracle in which the Holy Ghost

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[56]These lectures or sermons give the historian an excellent opportunity to analyze those religious doctrines which Finney personally preached in New York and which apparently had a deep effect upon New Yorkers' religious beliefs and practices. The sermons were copied, more or less verbatim, by Joshua Leavitt and published weekly in Leavitt's revivalistic New York Evangelist; New Yorkers could refer to Leavitt's copies only a few days after they had heard Finney himself give the sermon. Finney then edited Leavitt's transcriptions and published them as a book, Lectures on Revivals of Religion, which appeared in May, 1835; Lectures on Revivals quickly became an evangelistic best-seller, selling 12,000 copies in its first three months of publication. Lectures on Revivals has recently been reissued, edited by William McLoughlin and including a lengthy introduction by McLoughlin: Charles Grandison Finney, Lectures on the Revival of Religion, ed. by William G. McLoughlin (Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1960). The following references to Lectures on Revivals will be to the McLoughlin edition.

descended and radically altered the debased nature of man. There is nothing, he argued, in the act of conversion or justification that is "beyond the ordinary power of nature. It consists entirely in the right exercise of the powers of nature . . . ." In terms Gardiner Spring would have had difficulty in refuting, Finney insisted that "when mankind become religious they are not enabled to put forth exertions which they were unable before to put forth. They only exert the powers they had before in a different way, and use them for the glory of God."[57] It was man's moral inability, Finney asserted, again using Hopkinsian terms, man's sinful preference for the world, not a debased nature, that stood in the way of his salvation, and ultimately condemned him to hell. Man's salvation waited only upon the revival or awakening of his moral faculties. On this point Finney could have claimed the support of Gardiner Spring, Samuel Cox, of liberal Hopkinsians in New York and throughout the East.[58]

But here agreement ended. Only the Holy Ghost, Hopkinsians insisted, could miraculously awaken man's

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[57]Finney, "What a Revival of Religion Is," Lectures on Revivals, pp. 13, 9-13.

[58]As Finney stated in terms very similar to those used by Gardiner Spring at the beginning of Spring's New York ministry, "God induces him [man] to do it [obey God]. He influences him by his Spirit, because of his great wickedness and reluctance to obey. . . . Men are wholly indisposed to obey; and unless God interpose the influence of his Spirit, not a man on earth will ever obey the commands of God." Ibid., p. 9.

moral faculties. Man could pray and study. He could not save himself; God alone knew whom He had willed to save. But, Finney thundered in the winter of 1834, as he had in countless earlier western revivals, "Religion [by which he meant salvation or conversion] is the work of man. It is something for man to do. . . . It is man's duty. It is not a miracle, or dependent on a miracle in any sense. It is a purely philosophical [scientific or natural] result of the right use of constituted means--as much so as another effect produced by the application of means."[59] Man's moral faculties would respond to natural, humanly manipulatable stimuli. These, then, were Finney's two revolutionary doctrines: salvation is a natural and understandable process, and man is capable of being the active agent.

Salvation, the process by which the sinner is saved, Finney insisted time and again, was not, as orthodox Calvinists believed, an unworldly, an unnatural or supernatural

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[59] Ibid. McLoughlin in an editorial footnote points out that to Finney's generation, the term "philosophical" carried the implication "scientific or natural." In another sermon, Finney, keeping much of the Hopkinsian terminology, showed clearly how he pushed the moral inability doctrine past Spring's position until full responsibility for his own salvation came to rest upon the sinner himself. "If you live without the spirit you live without excuse. Obligation to perform duty never rests on the condition, that we shall first have the influence of the Spirit, but on the powers of moral agency. We, as moral agents, have the power to obey God, and are perfectly bound to obey, and the reason we do not is, that we are unwilling. . . . Sinners are not bound to repent because they have the Spirit's influence, or because they can obtain it, but because they are moral agents, and have the powers which God requires them to exercise." Finney, "Be Filled with the Spirit," Lectures on Revivals, pp. 107-108.

act. The Holy Ghost did not descend and miraculously transform a passive or slumbering sinner. Salvation was a natural act, open to all men and understandable to them. The stimulants or agents which Finney placed in the stead of the miraculous descent of the Holy Ghost were the new revival methods which he and other religious liberals had developed and, in particular, the simple and oft-repeated statement that man could act, that he could save himself. God, Finney contended, wished to save all men. He had therefore created man with a moral faculty capable of responding to psychological stimuli. Revival ministers, indeed believing Christians generally, could learn and use these stimuli, or means, to arouse the sinner's moral faculties. The aroused sinner would then turn to God, would choose God above the world--and thus save himself.[60] All

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[60]Elsewhere in this same sermon, Finney likened the salvation process to the planting and harvesting of a food crop. God's initial blessing was necessary if the grain were to grow. The crop nevertheless grew and ripened according to a scientific or natural process which God had ordained at the beginning of the world, a universal process which all good farmers could study and master. Finney, "What a Revival of Religion Is," Lectures on Revivals, pp. 14-15. In the same sermon Finney concretely discussed the precise effect of the revival in the salvation process. The revival was an unusual emotional experience, one so intense that religion and spiritual values suddenly appeared to the sinner of greater importance than the material world that surrounded him. At this moment the sinner had the motivation to choose God before the world. Where Hopkinsians had seen the miraculous descent of the Holy Ghost and the equally miraculous transformation of human nature as the determining event of the conversion experience, Finney claimed that God had so shaped human nature and the means to salvation that the adept manipulation of mass psychology could, without the direct and individual intervention of the Holy Ghost, enable an essentially well-meaning man to choose

the components of salvation, Finney insisted, existed within man and within the world. God thus held out the means of salvation to all men. It was the responsibility of sinful man to grasp it for himself. Where Isabella Graham and John Stanford had insisted that man could pray that he be granted a new heart and then, once saved, must actively work to become holy, Finney claimed that salvation itself was the product of human effort and determination. As he told his New York audiences:

> The agency is the sinner himself. The conversion of a sinner consists in his obeying the truth. It is therefore impossible it should take place without his agency, for it consists of his acting right. He is influenced to this by the agency of God, and by the agency of men.[61]

As Finney's view of salvation was different, so was his view of man and man's relation to God. To the orthodox Calvinist and the Hopkinsian alike, man was a finite, inactive creature. Man could not force God to save him, and if God willed to save him, no love man had for the world could thwart the act of justification. But not so Finney's man. Man was the voluntary agent. He could will to accept God's proffered salvation or to reject it. The ultimate

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correctly. "A revival breaks the power of the world and sin over Christians." Finney wrote, ". . . They have a new foretaste of heaven, and new desires after union to God, and the charm of the world is broken, and the power of sin overcome." Finney, "What a Revival of Religion Is," Lectures on Revivals, p. 16.

[61] Ibid., p. 18.

responsibility for his salvation or damnation rested not with God or with God's will, but with the sinner.[62]

Man could will, similarly, to save others, or refuse to save others. Man, as well as God, played a role in the conversion of sinners. Finney argued that, in creating a natural process for saving mankind, God had willed to work through human agents to save sinners. These agents could be the revival minister or missionary, who sought through exhortation and warnings to awaken the sleeping Christian.[63] But, Finney urged, the human agent could be the pious layman as well. The believer could bring about revivals of religion in others simply by his prayers, or better, by prayer accompanied by missionary activities. Indeed, Finney told his New York audience, if revivals did not come, if sinners were not saved, it was because Christians had not prayed and had not worked, not because God had predestined their damnation.[64] In the fourth of Finney's lectures on

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[62]"Men are not mere instruments in the hand of God," Finney stated, going on to assert that man could in fact refuse to be saved even when God desired to save him. Ibid., pp. 18-20.

[63]Again, Finney emphasized not only the power of the minister to provoke revivals--a feat which Finney asserted a true minister could perform at any time--but that the minister's actions were not remotely ordained by God, but wholly volitional. "Truth is the instrument [of God in conversion]. The preacher is the moral agent in the work; he acts; he is not a mere passive instrument; he is voluntary in promoting the conversion of sinners." Ibid., p. 18.

[64]Finney, throughout his sermons, emphasized again and again that the individual lay Christian, even a lay Christian without formal education, and of low social and economic status, could bring on a revival. If this lay Christian had

revivals, for example, Finney pointedly placed the responsibility for the sins and the spiritual deadness of New York upon the shoulders of his audience, the practicing Christians of New York.

> Brethren . . . Elders of the Church, men, women, any of you, and all of you. What do you say? . . . You see why you have not had a revival. It is only because you don't want one. Because you are not praying for it, nor anxious for it, nor putting forth efforts for it. I appeal to your own conscience. Are you making these efforts now, to promote a revival?[65]

At last evangelical Christians had a minister who boldly asserted that they and their missionaries had the power to save sinners. What Philip Whelpley, what the conservative Calvinist officers of the Young Men's Missionary Society of New York had written in 1816 concerning the missionary duties of the Christian need no longer be inconsistent with formal religious doctrine. Finney had

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deep faith and his minister lacked faith or was bound to a literal Calvinism, then that layman could be far more effective than the minister in saving souls. (Throughout the sermons one finds as well frequent antagonistic references to the wealthy and to higher education, as well as indications that Finney felt his congregation to be tempted frequently by the vices of social climbing and emulation of the rich.)

Essentially related to this position was Finney's belief that the individual was responsible not only for saving his own soul, but those of all around him. If sin existed, it was because Christians had not worked and prayed. If asked with sufficient faith, God would convert the world. As Finney remarked concerning the prayers of one faithful Christian: "I have known him pray as if he would do violence to heaven, and then seen the blessing come as plainly in answer to his prayer, as if it was revealed, so that no person would doubt it . . . ." Finney, "The Prayer of Faith," Lectures on Revivals, p. 84.

[65]Finney, "When a Revival Is to Be Expected," Lectures on Revivals, p. 35.

provided them with a theological rationale. Christians had a religious duty to go about the city saving sinners: their missionary endeavors might be the difference between the salvation and damnation of countless souls. Finney seldom let a sermon pass without pointing out to his audience their duties as city missionaries.

> Will you spend the winter in learning about revivals, and do nothing for them? I want you as fast as you learn anything on the subject of revivals, to put it in practice, and go to work and see if you cannot promote a revival among sinners here. . . . We call on you to unite now in a solemn pledge to God, that you will do your duty as fast as you learn what it is, and to pray that He will pour out his Spirit upon this church and upon all the city this winter.[66]

But this enthusiasm for saving men's souls was, as we have seen, not limited to Finney's followers. It began in the early years of the nineteenth century among circles far more carefully orthodox; it was encouraged by the New Divinity of Nathaniel W. Taylor, Lyman Beecher, and other New England Congregationalists. And in the years after Finney's removal to Oberlin in 1837, it continued to find support among many "liberal" New York Calvinists who had hesitated to accept Finney's sweeping emphasis on man's natural and moral ability.

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[66]Finney, "What a Revival of Religion Is," Lessons on Revivals, pp. 22-23. See also "When a Revival Is to Be Expected" and "How to Promote a Revival," Lectures on Revivals, passim. Indeed all of Finney's lectures were meant to instruct his audience on methods of stimulating a revival in New York or any other area. They were meant for immediate application, not for theological analysis. See, for example, two other sermons, "Means to Be Used with Sinners" and "How Churches Can Help Ministers," Lectures on Revivals, pp. 140-155, 223-249.

Thus a belief in God's desire to save all men and the Christian's duty to attempt to convert all men continued to influence philanthropic and concerned New Yorkers; the efforts of New York's city missions during the late 1830's, 1840's, and 1850's were based upon a pervasive and well-established evangelical tradition. The city mission movement was more than a response to the new problems of urban poverty. Its specific motives and methods were shaped by the religious enthusiasm of the opening decades of the nineteenth century.

The next few chapters will focus on a number of city missions so as to demonstrate more precisely the institutional evolution of these missions and to illustrate with specific instances these general trends I have been discussing. The first chapter will deal with the New York City Tract Society, an outgrowth of the religious tract movement, the second with the American Female Guardian Society, a by-product of the implacable moral zeal inspired by the Finney revivals of 1829 and 1831. The third chapter is a study of the New York Protestant Episcopal City Mission Society; missionary zeal affected not only Calvinist groups, but even the high church wing of the Protestant Episcopal Church of America.

CHAPTER IV

On the evening of February 19, 1827, a group of prominent philanthropists organized New York's first permanent city mission, the New York City Tract Society. Among the founders were leaders of the evangelical movement, theological liberals, and others long connected with the city's secular charities. Within a few years hundreds of the Society's workers were systematically visiting every section of the city, leaving tracts and Bibles and praying with the receptive. Though concerned with the spiritual condition of all classes and groups in the city, the City Tract Society began gradually to devote an increasing portion of its time and resources to the religious needs of the poor.

The New York City Tract Society, both in its program and its theological premises, differed greatly from earlier city missions. These tentative organizations had been founded specifically to care for the religious needs of New York's poor. To reach the outcast, they had depended on a few youthful ministers who preached sporadically and established occasional Sunday schools. The New York City Tract Society, on the other hand, was a product of the revival enthusiasm of the late 1820's and early 1830's, an enthusiasm closely

associated with evangelist Charles Grandison Finney. The Society, especially in its early years, hoped to convert all in New York; they did not at first see their object as that of a religious mission to the socially outcast. With so broad a goal, this new city mission could not content itself with the modest and indirect methods of earlier organizations, but sought rather to transform New York's pious and respectable classes into an enthusiastic millennial phalanx. Recruiting hundreds of volunteers, the Society's officers dispersed them as missionaries throughout the city, to distribute Bibles and tracts, to pray with the repentant, hopefully to convert all they encountered--both rich and poor. By 1836, over one thousand of these pious volunteers were systematically visiting throughout the city. Such an inclusive approach soon brought many of the Society's visitors--at first inadvertently, but gradually by design--into frequent and regular contact with the city's tenement population. Initially concerned only with the religious salvation of the poor, these visitors soon adopted another, temporal role, that of almoner to the poor. By 1834, the Society had begun to care for the material needs of steadily increasing numbers, clothing, feeding and finding jobs for the unemployed and unfortunate.

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The origins of this city mission lay far back in the evangelical movement. They can be traced to 1812 and the founding of the New York Religious Tract Society--one of

many such evangelical societies established during these years. Out of this organization, at first concerned primarily with spreading God's word along the frontier and in rural communities, developed the city mission, concerned with the spiritual and temporal needs of the urban poor.

The original aims of the Religious Tract Society, as the Society announced them in their first annual report in 1812, were to select religious pamphlets "consistent with the Reformation," print them cheaply in bulk, and then distribute them throughout the country. The objects of their distribution campaign were to be the "poor and the negligent."[1] The poor, to religious New Yorkers in 1812, in contradistinction to later city mission supporters, were not immigrants in the city slums, but rather those of the middle and lower middle classes who had moved away from established religious centers, either to the trans-Appalachian frontier or to new communities developing in the East. They were poor because they were not as yet able to support a minister, establish a church, or build a religious library. The negligent were those, either in the city or the country, poor or well-to-do, who chose not to perform these pious

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[1]The Constitution of the New York Religious Tract Society, reprinted in N.Y.R.T.S., Fourth Annual Report, 1815 (New York, 1816), p. 22; N.Y.R.T.S., "First Annual Report, 1812, presented 1813." The first ten annual reports of the N.Y.R.T.S. (the first two of which exist only in manuscript) are in the archives of the New York City Mission Society, 105 East 22nd Street, New York City. For English origins of the tract movement, see Brown, Fathers, pp. 244-245; Foster, Errand, Part I; supra, Chap. III.

acts. The Tract Society hoped that by saturating "destitute" areas with religious literature and by giving tracts to the irreligious wherever found, they could soon convert the nation to evangelical Christianity. The aims of the Religious Tract Society were thus identical with those of the equally pious Bible, mission and Sunday school societies which Christians were establishing throughout the East during the first two decades of the nineteenth century.[2]

The Religious Tract Society's membership was remarkably similar as well. The men who founded and managed the Tract Society in 1812 were, with few exceptions, already active members of New York's varied mission, Bible and Sunday school societies. And they would soon take the lead in establishing these organizations on a national basis. These activists included the city's leading revival ministers, Philip Milledoler, John Mitchell Mason, Gardiner Spring, Samuel H. Cox, John Romeyn and Philip Whelpley, and her most zealous and philanthropic laymen, Divie Bethune, Philip D. Keese, Arthur Tappan, Thomas Stokes, Richard Varick, John Caldwell, and Leonard Bleecker.[3]

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[2]N.Y.R.T.S., "Second Annual Report"; N.Y.R.T.S., Fourth Annual Report, pp. 18-19. See, as well, the highly missionary statements by the Society's corresponding secretary, Zachariah Lewis, in the two newspapers he edited, the New York Commercial Advertiser and the American Missionary Register.

[3]For a brief discussion of these men, their varied evangelical interests and their theological position, see Appendix A.

The first concern of the Religious Tract Society was to supply the religious needs of its own state. And these were great. New York in the opening decades of the nineteenth century was still a frontier state. Large areas had just been opened to settlement and its population multiplied as immigrants from New England and Europe moved up the Hudson Valley and then, via the Erie Canal, into the heartland of the state.[4] The Religious Tract Society hoped by distributing their tracts to keep this population true to Christianity and, hopefully, to the Calvinism of the eastern seaboard. During their first year of operations, for instance, the Society gave nearly 14,000 tracts to missionaries and local clergymen to distribute throughout New York State. The following year, the Society gave 1,600 tracts to an itinerant minister to distribute along the Hudson River, in the counties bordering Vermont and Canada and then across the Finger Lakes to Buffalo and Lake Erie. By 1814, the New York philanthropists had decided to send tracts directly to the newly established towns and villages of their state, New England, and Pennsylvania. That year they sent over a thousand tracts to Delaware County, fourteen hundred to the Niagara frontier and thirteen hundred more to the state's "Northern frontier."[5]

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[4]Ellis, Short History, Chaps. 14 and 16; Cross, Burnt Over District, Book II.

[5]N.Y.R.T.S., "First Annual Report," no page; N.Y.R.T.S., Third Annual Report, 1814 (New York, 1815), pp. 5, 13-14; N.Y.R.T.S., Fourth Annual Report, pp. 5-6; N.Y.R.T.S., Sixth Annual Report, 1817 (New York, 1818), p. 8; N.Y.R.T.S., Eighth Annual Report, 1819 (New York, 1820), p. 15.

Despite these rural interests, the New York society did not ignore its own city. At first, however, the officers of the Religious Tract Society did not feel that their city tract distribution differed in any way from that of their frontier work. The Society sought through the efforts of individual members to reach all classes and sections of the city with their religious literature. They circulated tracts among their friends, left them on steamships and stage coaches, gave them to strangers in the street, to their servants, and to the clerks in their offices. Their object was not to meet any of the specific, temporal needs of the city, but to convert all to Christ.[6]

Gradually, however, the Society's contact with the poor of their city became more intimate and direct. Individual members began to seek out the city's slum dwellers in the hope of educating and ultimately converting them. James Eastburn, for example, a Society manager, had as early as 1814 and 1815 begun to visit the homes of the poor, leaving tracts and talking with the residents. (Eastburn had first become aware of the city's poor and their religious

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[6]The Society, of course, gave tracts to the city's regular charities, to the Orphan Asylum, the free schools, the prisons, and the Hospital, and as well to soldiers stationed in the city and to visiting sailors. This did not alter the diffuse nature of its work. N.Y.R.T.S., Fifth Annual Report, 1815 (New York, 1817), p. 13. See, as well, Female Branch of the N.Y.R.T.S., Report adopted at the First Anniversary Meeting of the Female Branch of the New York Religious Tract Society, in manuscript ledger, "Constitution and Minutes, March 18, 1822 to February 12, 1827," New York City Mission Society Archives.

needs when he had helped to establish charity Sunday schools in some of the city's slum neighborhoods.) By 1816, Eastburn's visiting and observations led him to propose at the Society's annual meeting that Society members begin to distribute tracts directly to the city's poor. And to all the poor, he urged, to the intemperate, the vicious and the irreligious poor, as well as to "the neglected poor, the sick and the dying."[7] Certainly such ministers and pious laymen as Samuel H. Cox, his close friend, Gardiner Spring, John D. Keese, and Divie Bethune were all well aware of the existence of city slums and the misery of their inhabitants.

The reports of the tract society's own auxiliaries also drew its attention to the existence of the city poor and to their religious needs. One of the City Tract Society's oldest and largest auxiliaries, the Female Tract Society of Providence, Rhode Island, for example, chose the factory workers of Rhode Island's newly established mill towns as its mission field. And in particular, the child operative, whom the Society's ladies feared would grow up without education or religion. As early as 1815, the Providence society established three schools in factory districts near Providence and hired college students to instruct the mill children in both religious and secular subjects. The Society helped as well to found three women's organizations to dispense temporal charity to the poor of Providence.[8]

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[7]N.Y.R.T.S., Fifth Annual Report, p. 40.

[8]Ibid., pp. 31-32; N.Y.R.T.S., Sixth Annual Report, pp. 37-39.

The Female Juvenile Society of the Cedar Street Presbyterian Church in New York and the Samaritan Society of New Orleans also actively distributed their tracts among the poor and laboring classes.[9] But the auxiliary most active in the work with the urban poor was the Religious Tract Society's own Female Branch. Members visited the poor in their homes, leaving tracts and praying with the more receptive. Others, connected with the African Free School, distributed tracts among the city's Negro population. Finally in 1826, these experiences led them to announce "a plan for district visiting" in all sections of the city.[10] At the time, the ladies were not in a financial position to begin their ambitious program. Only a few years later, however, the visiting plan was adopted by the ladies' new parent organization, the New York City Tract Society.

While the distribution and visitation work revealed the existence of poverty and slums to New Yorkers--to many for the first time--it did not transform the nature of the Society's labors. Even when working with the city's poor, the tract society's interest remained almost exclusively

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[9]N.Y.R.T.S., Fifth Annual Report, pp. 11-12; N.Y.R.T.S., Eighth Annual Report, p. 16.

[10]Female Branch of the N.Y.R.T.S., "Constitution and Minutes, 1822-1826," entry for September 29, 1826. Significantly, the ladies traced their interest in visiting to the influence of the "excellent Local System of the Revd. Dr. Chalmers." Female Branch, Second Annual Report, 1824 (New York, 1824), pp. 31-32; Female Branch, Third Annual Report, 1825 (New York, 1825); Female Branch, "Minutes, 1825-1827," entry of March 25, 1827.

religious. The poor were still poor because they were without religious comforts; charity was still defined as tract distribution and prayer.

At the same time, however, that the Society's interests were expanding, its mode of operation was undergoing a major change. Begun as a single organization to print and distribute tracts throughout America, the Religious Tract Society soon found that its New York City membership could not, unaided, supply the religious needs of the entire American frontier. After only three years of operation, the Society had found itself four hundred dollars in debt, while their tracts had yet to reach many communities, even in their own state. To improve both their financial and distributing arrangements, the Religious Tract Society began to systematically encourage the formation of auxiliary tract societies. These auxiliaries were to raise money with which to purchase tracts from the parent organization at a reduced rate, and then to distribute the tracts themselves, thus assuring an income to the parent society which undertook the printing and relieving it of the task of distribution. To encourage groups to organize in communities throughout New York State and the country generally, the Religious Tract Society began in 1815 to send letters, its annual report, and a selection of two hundred tracts to prominent citizens in New York State, Connecticut and New Jersey urging them to form tract

distributing societies.[11] So successful was this appeal that the following year the Religious Tract Society was able to greatly expand the number of tracts it printed and then sell two-thirds of them to its own auxiliaries, a ratio it maintained for the next decade. That same year it showed its first profit.[12]

Yet financial embarrassment continued to plague the New York Society. Beginning in 1820, sales of tracts reached a plateau. Many of the auxiliaries, to save the expense and delay of transportation from New York City to the West, printed their own tracts; others shifted affiliation from New York to the newly established and vigorous New England Tract Society of Boston.[13] Indeed these two organizations, each committed to saturating the West with religious literature, soon found themselves in competition for auxiliaries and financial support. Since both were "Presbygational" organizations and both suffered from financial embarrassment, it was not long before they united in 1825 to form the American Tract Society. This new organization limited itself to printing low-cost religious tracts, to be bought

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[11] N.Y.R.T.S., Fourth Annual Report, pp. 6, 17-18. In doing this, the N.Y.R.T.S. was clearly following the example of the London Tract Society, which relied heavily upon its auxiliaries for financial support and for the distribution of its tracts. Foster, Errand, pp. 77, 87-88; Griffin, Brothers', Chap. 5.

[12] So successful was this program of establishing auxiliaries that by 1818, N.Y.R.T.S. auxiliaries dotted Long Island, New Jersey, and New York State.

[13] N.Y.R.T.S., Tenth Annual Report, 1821 (New York, 1822), pp. 5, 14, 21, 32.

and distributed by its network of far-flung auxiliaries. Thus the principal responsibility for distributing tracts to the "needy" and the "negligent" now passed to these auxiliaries.[14]

The founding of a national organization did not result in the members of the old New York Religious Tract Society losing interest in their own city. Indeed, at the urging of a number of New York members of the American Tract Society and with the help of their Female Branch, leaders of the former Religious Tract Society intensified their distribution of religious literature in New York City. At first they attempted to work through the American Tract Society. Supplied with tracts printed by the national society, individual members visited the City's markets and the waterfront and gave out tracts to artisans, sailors, and to passersby. But they soon realized that such sporadic distribution was not adequate to the growing religious needs of their own city.[15] New York's population increased each year, swelled by European immigration and by young men and women from rural America. Suddenly cut off from accustomed religious ties and moral influences, these new city-dwellers formed a spiritual flotsam in an ever growing and potentially corrupting city. New York's pious community

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[14]For a discussion of the American Tract Society, see Foster, Errand, and Griffin, Brothers'.

[15]N.Y.C.T.S., First Annual Report, Presented February 6, 1828 (New York, 1828), p. 11.

clearly had the moral responsibility for urging them to read religious and moral literature, and for inviting them to join one of the city's churches. With the city's population increasing each year, Christians could not delay. New York City desperately needed its own tract society.[16]

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Thus on the evening of February 19, 1827, acting through the Young Men's Auxiliary Tract Society, the leaders of the old Religious Tract Society reassembled to form a new organization, the New York City Tract Society. Former presidents, treasurers, and managers of the Religious Tract Society, the leading philanthropists and evangelical Christians of the city attended: Richard Varick, Thomas Stokes, Arthur Tappan, Marcus Wilbur, Moses Allen and the Reverends John Stanford, Charles Sommes, James Milnor and Gardiner Spring. Zachariah Lewis, the last president of the Religious Tract Society, became the first president of the new organization. They maintained their ties with the American Tract Society and organized the New York society as an auxiliary of the national group, its function simply to distribute tracts throughout New York City.[17]

Indeed, the aims and methods of the City Tract Society at first closely resembled those of the Religious Tract Society and the American Tract Society. The managers of the

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[16]See, for example, ibid., p. 21.

[17]Ibid., List of Officers, no page.

City Tract Society, like those of the other two groups (they were, to a large extent, identical in these early years), saw themselves and their organization as part of a world-wide evangelical crusade. Their objectives were the gaining of converts to evangelical Christianity, strengthening the faith of fellow Christians, and the exerting of a moral influence upon society generally. At first the managers made no concerted effort to contact the city's poor. They were not secular reformers, seeking to solve the problems of crime or pauperism. They sought rather the conversion and moral improvement of all groups and classes in New York, the respectable as much, if not more, than the poor. They chose to work in the city simply because it was one area, familiar to them, that the American Tract Society had not included in its distribution program. They did not, in 1827, as many later religious philanthropists would, choose New York because it was an area peculiarly corrupt and sinful, because it was a city.[18]

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[18]During the first three years or so of its operations, the Society saw itself as but one manifestation of a world-wide evangelical movement. It commented upon European and English efforts to counteract atheism through the distribution of religious tracts, and upon efforts at tract distribution begun in communities throughout America. Beginning in 1830, they also carefully noted all the communities which adopted a system of monthly tract distribution--a program initiated by the N.Y.C.T.S.--and related this pious work to the wave of revivals then sweeping Greater New England. As late as the mid-1830's they made little distinction between their city tract distribution efforts and rural revivalistic activities. N.Y.C.T.S., Constitution of the New York City Tract Society, Article 8, bound in the Society's First Annual Report; N.Y.C.T.S., First Annual Report, p. 12; N.Y.C.T.S., Third Annual Report, presented February, 1830

The organization and activities of the early City Tract Society reflected these evangelical aims. Most of the managers and active members agreed in considering the great social and religious problems of New York to be Sabbath-breaking, intemperance, and swearing. These were common to all groups in the city. And they were confident of the efficacy of tract distribution in reforming the manners and the morals of the ungodly.[19] The officers of the new society established six permanent committees to distribute tracts to varied groups and areas in the city--to those whose conversion might play a significant role in promoting the millennium. These were the sailors and ship captains of the waterfront, artisans and shopkeepers in the city markets, the city's charity Sunday school scholars, the inhabitants of its public institutions, its suburban population (often without a minister or church), and the passengers on the steamboats which plied the Hudson River and the coast of southern New England.[20] These were not the very poor, the inhabitants of the city's slums. The tract distributors sought to convert those most like themselves: businessmen and families from the countryside around

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(New York, 1830), pp. 9, 19-20; N.Y.C.T.S., Fourth Annual Report, presented April 18, 1831 (New York, 1831), pp. 9-10, 12, 14; N.Y.C.T.S., Eighth Annual Report, Presented March 11, 1835 (New York, 1835), pp. 47, 50, 52.

[19]N.Y.C.T.S., First Annual Report, pp. 19-20; N.Y.C.T.S., Second Annual Report, Presented February 4, 1829 (New York, 1829), p. 20.

[20]N.Y.C.T.S., Second Annual Report, pp. 8, 12.

New York, shopkeepers and mechanics who might have their shops open on Sunday. They sought as well the conversion of those traditional objects of religious charity, the sick, the criminal, the paupers of the Alms-House, the children of the poor, and sailors.[21]

These aims may have been limited, but the method of tract distribution itself attested to the deep religious commitment which motivated the Tract Society's members. In 1827, the Society had no salaried employees to distribute its tracts. All the members of the Society, even its wealthiest founders, were active in one of its distributing committees and personally went about the city giving out tracts and admonishing sinners.[22] Arthur Tappan, for example, one of the city's wealthiest wholesalers, was a member of the Society's waterfront distributing committee and regularly visited the piers and warehouses along the lower East River. William Dodge, another of New York's leading merchants, was an active member of the steamboat committee. Merchant Zephaniah Platt and physician James C. Bliss, along with city chaplain John Stanford, composed the Committee on Humane and Criminal Institutions and in 1827 alone personally distributed over 42,000 pages of tracts to the poor in the alms-house and the city hospital. On Sundays, between morning and evening church services, the tract distributors

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[21]See statement of aims, ibid., p. 21.

[22]N.Y.C.T.S., Constitution, Article 8.

would fan out through the city. Along the waterfront they admonished sailors for drinking or swearing. In the public markets they urged shopkeepers to observe the Sabbath. Finding a group of boys headed for the outskirts of the city for a game of ball, members of the Committee on the Outskirts of the City scolded them and sent them off to the nearest Sunday school. This pattern of tract distribution was informal, conceived as it was by men who still thought in terms of the small and relatively simple city they remembered from the opening years of the century.[23]

In 1829, however, the managers of the City Tract Society decided upon a radically new program, one which drastically changed their organization's activities, aims, and structure. At the Society's second annual meeting, Arthur Tappan rose to suggest that the Society form committees whose duty it would be to distribute a tract each month to every New York City family; the Society's ad hoc methods seemed grossly inadequate to the city's religious needs. The membership approved Tappan's plan and ordered the creation of committees to systematically distribute tracts in each of the city's wards.[24] The committees were

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[23]N.Y.C.T.S., First Annual Report, pp. 12-21; N.Y.C.T.S., Second Annual Report, pp. 11-16; N.Y.C.T.S., Third Annual Report, p. 18; N.Y.C.T.S., Fourth Annual Report, pp. 16-17; N.Y.C.T.S., Seventh Annual Report, Presented April 16, 1834 (New York, 1834), pp. 36-37.

[24]N.Y.C.T.S., Third Annual Report, pp. 9-10. The Society and Tappan were influenced in this choice by the decision, that same year, of the several national evangelical societies to saturate the Mississippi Valley with

to consist of the tract distributors for that particular ward; each tract distributor would have approximately sixty families in his district. He was to visit every family at least once a month. Besides leaving tracts, the visitor was to discuss the family's religious life, urge church membership and regular attendance upon all, and offer to enroll the family's children in a convenient Sunday school. All sections of the city should be visited, Society managers consistently urged--even the poorest.

Over the next few years, the tract distributor's new role gradually changed and expanded. At first, in 1829 or 1830, these pious visitors had simply given out tracts and urged their allotted families to embark upon a religious life.[25] Slowly, however, individual visitors

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religious tracts, Bibles, and ministers. The N.Y.C.T.S.'s Third Annual Report contains the comment, "Are there not multitudes of families . . . even in our own city, who neglect all the means of grace, . . . and whom it is as truly our duty to supply with Tracts as any in the Valley of the West?" (p. 10). Undoubtedly of great influence, as well, was the system of district visiting adopted by the British evangelicals. They had supported a system of district visiting for a number of years, but in 1828 a representative group of evangelicals united to form the General Society for Promoting District Visiting. The purpose of the new national society was to establish "a regular system of domiciliary visitation . . . by which every poor family might be visited at their habitations, from house to house, and from room to room . . . ." Brown, Fathers, pp. 239-241. The proximity of the dates when English and New York evangelical groups both chose to systematically distribute tracts, monthly, in specific, well-defined districts, and the history of the close relationship between the two groups, suggests that Tappan and the New York Society were almost certainly influenced by the British precedent.

[25]During the early years of the tract distribution effort, the N.Y.C.T.S. attributed conversions simply to the impact of the tract and not to the visitor's efforts to

became deeply involved with the religious life of some among their assigned households. They began to pray with their charges and exhort them to seek God. These distributors were no longer satisfied if a family simply accepted religious tracts, or even read them. They sought now the conversion of at least one member of each family. In April, 1832, for example, a tract visitor commented, "I do not know of any conversions in my district merely from reading the tracts, but I know of four who during the past month have passed from death unto life." These four were persons with whom the distributor had spent long sessions discussing their religious life; two had attended Bible classes at his suggestion. Beginning in that year, visitors first reported selecting individuals each month for special prayer.

In 1833, the Society officially recognized this new dimension in the distributor's role. That year the City Tract Society's officers formally instructed the visitors not simply to leave tracts, but to earnestly pray for and with each family. Indeed the officers implied that the tract distributor had failed in his duty unless he held prayer and Bible-reading sessions with his families and worked zealously for their conversion.[26]

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convert the individual (of which activity there is little evidence in the early '30's). See N.Y.C.T.S., Third Annual Report, pp. 11-16; N.Y.C.T.S., Fifth Annual Report, Presented March 14, 1832 (New York, 1832), pp. 1-22.

[26]N.Y.C.T.S., Sixth Annual Report, pp. 13, 10-14.

The official publications of the Tract Society reflected these changes. Increasingly the Society's annual reports contained lengthy descriptions of conversions and of tract distributors' efforts to awaken sinners to the need for salvation. The conversions reported were invariably lengthy, even painful, experiences. The subject might consider himself a devout Christian, an atheist, a Universalist, or as one simply indifferent to religion. The tract distributor would nevertheless press a tract upon the unregenerate soul, talk to him of his sins and of man's dependence upon Christ's mercy. At first the man or woman might refuse the tract, rebuff or insult the distributor--but might nevertheless be finally overcome by consciousness of sin. Sometimes, the visitors' accounts noted, this would occur only after years of drinking or of religious indifference, often at the point of death. Seized by fear, the sinner would be unable to rest. Finally, almost at the point of madness, he would turn to Christ, beseeching His mercy. Peace followed this earthly torment--and another sinner had been saved. During the sinner's ordeal of anguish and fear, the tract distributor prayed with him, forcing him to recount his sins, picturing the torments of hell, but affirming, at the same time, the balm of Christ's love held out to all who would seek it. Joyously, the tract distributor reported each conversion to the City Tract Society. Proudly the Society printed the

account in its next annual report.[27] Indeed, beginning in 1833, the annual reports regularly included a list of the number converted each month, a policy the Society continued until the 1860's.[28]

These institutional changes reflected radical alterations in the Society's aims and theological emphases. By 1831 and 1832, the City Tract Society's officers and members had begun to see their tract distribution as part of a great religious revival, sweeping across America and bringing with it the millennium. Indeed, as early as 1829 (the year, significantly, that the Society adopted its plan to systematically distribute to all in the city) the City Tract Society managers announced, "Christian Friends! This is no time for halting. It is an age of great events, the millennial day is approaching . . ."[29] The next year they confidently predicted that the distribution of tracts would, "with the blessing of God, destroy every vice and nourish every virtue."[30] After four years of systematically distributing tracts in each ward in the city, they concluded: "never have your Board been so thoroughly convinced that, in this

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[27]For examples of descriptions of conversions, see N.Y.C.T.S., Seventh Annual Report, pp. 13, 17, 27-28; N.Y.C.T.S., Ninth Annual Report, pp. 21, 24; N.Y.C.T.S., Twelfth Annual Report, Presented December 19, 1838 (New York, 1839), p. 44. Such descriptions dot the Society's reports throughout the 1830's.

[28]N.Y.C.T.S., Sixth Annual Report, pp. 25-27.

[29]N.Y.C.T.S., Second Annual Report, p. 21.

[30]N.Y.C.T.S., Third Annual Report, p. 9.

system, when it shall be seized with the united energy of the Church, they have the lever which shall move the foundation of Satan's empire in this city . . . ."[31] By 1835, the City Tract Society's officers boasted of the changes which had transformed their organization. No longer was it simply a society that coldly distributed tracts. Its volunteers had become missionaries of Christ, struggling for the salvation of each individual they contacted. The City Tract Society now considered itself "a society to carry the Gospel by the living voice, as well as the written word 'to every creature' . . . and . . . in the hand of God . . . to save all." In 1834, the Society's Board of Managers wrote of the duties and aims of the visitors:

> The object before them has been the conversion of the entire city to the faith of Jesus Christ. It is a great work, and to the eye of sense, insurmountable obstacles oppose its accomplishment. But in reliance upon the arm of God, the work can be done: it must be done. They have endeavored, therefore, to impress upon the minds of those engaged in it, that the mere distribution of Tracts is only a subordinate part of the work, and that the high hopes of the friends of this cause will only be realized, when, in imitation of the great apostles of the Gentiles, every distributor shall, with the spirit of his Master, go from house to house "warning every man, and teaching every man, night and day with tears."[32]

These views of their organization and its religious objectives marked a drastic change from those expressed in 1812 by the founders of the New York Religious Tract Society.

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[31] N.Y.C.T.S., Sixth Annual Report, p. 9.

[32] N.Y.C.T.S., Eighth Annual Report, p. 12; N.Y.C.T.S., Seventh Annual Report, p. 11.

They had urged the distribution of tracts because the written word would obviate the need for personal preaching. Religious literature, as distinct from the sermons of itinerant, frontier ministers, would not excite the emotions or appeal to man's corrupt senses. Rarely did the Religious Tract Society refer to the individual conversions which resulted from their distribution work, never to the revivals which flared up throughout New York State during the very years the Religious Tract Society was most active in that area. How different, then, the missionary zeal and the millennial hopes expressed a generation later by the leaders and workers of the newly founded City Tract Society.

What factors explain these changes? Basically they were the three we have already discussed. First was the Second Great Awakening and the evangelical movement within American Protestantism. Second and more specifically were the great urban revivals of Charles Grandison Finney. And finally there were the changes which had taken place in New York City itself during the generation between 1812 and 1832.

The managers and members of the City Tract Society, with a handful of exceptions, belonged to either the Presbyterian or the Reformed Church of New York. Naturally, they considered themselves orthodox Calvinists and adhered to the doctrines delineated in the Westminster Confession. For many of them, however, this adherence had become increasingly formal. While their religious zeal in no way decreased, their theological orientation lay less and less in the

direction of orthodox Calvinism, more and more in the direction of the new evangelism.

In particular the Society espoused a belief in unlimited atonement, in the ability of Christians to act as agents in the conversion of sinners, and in the importance of revivals in bringing the millennium. No longer did the officers of the City Tract Society insist (as their orthodox predecessors had in 1812) upon God's infinite justice in condemning to hell the vast majority of mankind. More and more this traditional Calvinism was tempered by confidence in Christ's desire to save all men. "But Christ is full of compassion," the Society's managers wrote in 1834, "and unwilling that any should perish."[33] Salvation, made possible by Christ's amnesty, now depended upon man seeking out Christ, confessing his sins, and claiming His mercy. The countless conversion accounts in the Society's annual reports make clear their unfaltering belief that Christ wished to save all mankind.

Equally clear was their conviction that pious tract distributors were agents in the conversion process. Hence the logic in their attempting to seek the conversion of every family in the city. God, the Tract Society's officers believed, blessed their members' prayers, their tracts, their very conversations, making the Society's volunteers agents of His saving grace. The Tract Society's visitors

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[33]N.Y.C.T.S., Seventh Annual Report, p. 9.

came, indeed, by the mid-thirties to see their agency in the conversion of individual sinners as a necessity in bringing the millennium. The changes in religious beliefs which were foreshadowed early in the century in the official statements of such mission societies as the Young Men's Missionary Society of New York or the Female Missionary Society for the Poor of the City of New York clearly reached maturity in the assumptions and attitudes of the New York Tract Society.

This new enthusiastic theology was in the American air in the late 1820's and 1830's. Its optimism, its vigor, its faith in individual action certainly seemed appropriate to the mood of the highly ambitious, materialistic, and rising port of New York. But specific events in the years between 1827 and 1835 crystallized these new beliefs for New Yorkers. During these years Charles Grandison Finney conducted his great eastern revivals.[34]

Throughout these years Finney maintained close personal ties with a number of the managers and officers of the New York City Tract Society. Perhaps his earliest eastern supporter was Arthur Tappan, and by 1826 and 1827 such other advocates of tract distribution as Lewis Tappan, Anson G. Phelps, and William and David Dodge had all become ardent Finney disciples. Zephaniah Platt, one of the Society's officers and most active tract distributors, while living

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[34]Supra, Chap. III.

in western New York, had been a personal convert of Charles Finney.[35] Both through such personal contacts and in his theology, Finney crystallized this growing and pervasive enthusiasm, this increasing emphasis on human ability.

No sooner had Finney arrived in the East, preaching in Wilmington in 1827, than Anson G. Phelps and the Tappans arranged a secret meeting between the youthful revivalist and New York's orthodox Presbyterian clergy. They hoped, in this way, to win Finney an entree to the city's pulpits, united in their suspicion of his "new measures." When this failed and the regular ministry refused to invite Finney to preach in the city, the Tappans, against the wishes of their own pastor, asked Finney to preach as summer replacement at their Laight Street Presbyterian Church. In the years that followed, in order to provide Finney with a regular church, Anson G. Phelps, with financial support from the Tappans, purchased several churches for Finney and his congregations. It was from these churches that Finney led his two great New York revivals, one from the fall of 1829 to mid-summer of 1830, the second beginning in 1832 and extending until his departure for Oberlin in 1835.[36]

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[35]McLoughlin, Modern Revivalism, pp. 50-51; Charles G. Finney, Memoirs of Rev. Charles G. Finney, Written by Himself (New York, 1876), pp. 275-277, 280-283.

[36]McLoughlin, Modern Revivalism, pp. 51-53. For a description of these new evangelical churches, see Susan Hayes Ward, The History of the Broadway Tabernacle Church, from Its Organization in 1840 to the Close of 1900, Including Factors Influencing Its Formation (New York, 1901), pp. 21-32, and L. Nelson Nichols, History of the Broadway Tabernacle of New York City (New Haven, 1940), pp. 52-55, 61-63.

These revivals had the effect of presenting the new theological beliefs dramatically to New Yorkers. Thousands came to hear Finney's lectures on revivals and to attend his evening prayer and Bible meetings. The number of converts grew, impressing even the indifferent and hostile, and soon the revival spread to other churches. Merchants gave their clerks time off to attend Finney's meetings, while special early morning services were held for the businessmen themselves. By 1832, Finney's New York City converts had established seven new churches.[37]

Finney taught new methods, as well as new ideas. Indeed many of the missionary techniques adopted by the City Tract Society's distributors of prayer, conversation and Bible-reading were first developed by Finney during these revivals. It was he who urged Christians to overcome their natural reticence and to go among the unregenerate seeking to convert them. For instance, during his revival meetings it was his custom to station converts throughout the church. They were to observe if any person near them was particularly moved and, if so, urge him to stay after the meeting for special prayers. (And their

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[37] For an important firsthand description of Finney's New York revivals, see his Memoirs, pp. 272-283, 320-325. These new Presbyterian (later Congregational) churches organized as free churches, that is, without the customary pew rental fee. They hoped to appeal to the middle and lower middle classes, perhaps even to the artisans and the poor of New York, a group established churches had made little effort to incorporate into church membership. Cf. Finney's remarks on the work of the Dey Street First Free Presbyterian Church. Finney, Memoirs, p. 283.

enthusiasm was unquestionable; Arthur Tappan, for example, one evening seized the lapel of a prospective convert and refused to let go until his prisoner had promised to attend special prayer meetings that same evening.[38] City Tract Society visitors reported countless zealous acts of this kind when seeking the conversion of a resident of their assigned district.) Finney also urged his converts to visit homes throughout the city, especially in the poorer sections surrounding the Chatham Street Chapel; these visitors would announce church services and urge religion upon the impenitent. As Finney commented in his Autobiography, "Our ladies were not afraid to go and gather in all classes, from the neighborhood round about."[39]

It was in 1829, the year that Finney began his revival in New York (following similar revivals in Philadelphia and Rochester), that Arthur Tappan, already a Finney disciple, proposed the universal distribution of tracts in New York. In 1830 and 1831, during and immediately following Finney's forceful sermons urging New Yorkers to go through the streets seeking the conversion of all, the City Tract Society visitors began to do just that; they began to pray and struggle for the justification of every family in their

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[38] Ibid., pp. 322-323.

[39] Ibid., p. 321. Finney sent his disciples out to some of New York's worst slums. They went from house to house urging people to attend Finney's meetings and afterwards visited those who had gone, seeking to secure their conversion. This work closely resembled the visiting conducted by the New York City Tract Society.

district. That same year, 1830, the Society predicted that its visitors, through their personal missionary zeal, would "with the blessing of God, destroy every vice and nourish every virtue."[40] In the pre-millennial enthusiasm of 1830 the Society meant their statement quite literally.

A close relation also would appear to have existed between Finney's preaching and the willingness of New Yorkers to volunteer as tract distributors and city missionaries. In 1830, following Finney's first New York revival, the number of the Society's tract distributors increased from roughly fifty to nearly five hundred. This number continued to increase slowly over the next few years. During the winter of 1834-1835, however, the winter of Finney's second New York revival, over one thousand men and women actively engaged in tract distribution and missionary activities.[41] Samuel Halliday, during the next three decades one of New York's best-known and most active city missionaries, reported that it was Finney's revivals that had led him into missionary work. Moreover, he recalled years later, almost every member of his church had felt

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[40]N.Y.C.T.S., Seventh Annual Report, p. 24.

[41]N.Y.C.T.S., Second Annual Report, "List of Officers," no page; N.Y.C.T.S., Fourth Annual Report, p. 18; N.Y.C.T.S., Sixth Annual Report, pp. 9-10; N.Y.C.T.S., Seventh Annual Report, p. 9; N.Y.C.T.S., Ninth Annual Report, p. 13; N.Y.C.T.S., Eleventh Annual Report, Presented December 20, 1837 (New York, 1838), p. 210. At all times, at least half of the tract distributors were women. Clearly this type of religious activity offered activist women a socially acceptable area in which to expend their energies.

Finney's influence and become an active Christian worker as a result.[42]

Finney's influence is clearly apparent not only in the increased number of the Tract Society's volunteer distributors but in their changed activities and self-image as well. New York's regular ministers, in many cases conservative in both theology and social views, clearly would not and could not visit all over the city, praying with every inhabitant. Lay tract distributors thus assumed the role of revivalists to their city.[43] The division of New York into tract districts gave each distributor his own "parish," his own flock to exhort and convert. Finney had repeatedly insisted in his winter sermons that the lay Christian must act to promote conversions and revivals, if his minister would not. Thus encouraged, the tract visitors--as they were now called--began to actively proselytize

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[42]Halliday, Winning Souls, pp. 7-12, 20-29.

[43]There was apparently some hostility between some members of the regular ministry and the officers and workers of the Tract Society. This ill-will was undoubtedly influenced by the regular clergy's hostility to Finney and his revivals and the growing split within the Presbyterian Church between revival and conservative groups. In 1836, indeed, Finney withdrew from the Presbyterian Church to accept the pastorate of the Broadway Tabernacle, organized with the financial support of the Tappans, Dodges, and A. G. Phelps as a Congregational Church. Beginning in 1834 the N.Y.C.T.S. began to criticize the regular churches for their failure to support the Society's efforts to secure a city-wide revival, and also for failing to bring religion to the city's poor. N.Y.C.T.S., Seventh Annual Report, p. 50; N.Y.C.T.S., Eighth Annual Report, p. 35. With revival-minded ministers, however, the Society and its workers maintained the closest relations.

the unchurched and to bring their converts to regular churches fully prepared for membership.[44]

The Society's officers did all they could do to encourage the distributors to view themselves as city missionaries. In each annual report, they carefully recorded the numbers converted in each ward. The ministers whose lengthy sermons marked each annual meeting of the Tract Society also stressed the importance of the layman's new role. Only if each individual Christian worked as a missionary, the Reverend Smith told the tract distributors in 1835, only if he were "willing to labor and 'travail in birth' for his dying fellow men," could the millennium come.[45] Conscientiously the lay tract distributor strove to be worthy of his responsibility as missionary. Often he

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[44]By 1835, the Society began to insist that the individual tract distributors must see their job as that of going out and converting individual sinners. Only in this way would the "church" grow in New York. "How can the world be converted but by the conversion of individuals? And how can individuals be reached but by the PERSONAL EFFORTS of the INDIVIDUAL MEMBERS of the church?" That same year, the Society asserted that it had become "a society to carry the Gospel by the living voice as well as the written word 'to every creature' . . . whether stranger or citizen, native or foreigner. Its object is to reach all; and . . . in the hands of God . . . to save all." N.Y.C.T.S., Seventh Annual Report, p. 31; N.Y.C.T.S., Eighth Annual Report, pp. 12, 49; N.Y.C.T.S., Sixth Annual Report, pp. 11-21; N.Y.C.T.S., Eleventh Annual Report, Presented December 20, 1837 (New York, 1838), p. 80.

[45]The Reverend Smith (no first name given), quoted in N.Y.C.T.S., Eighth Annual Report, pp. 12, 5-12. See similar remarks made later that year by the Reverend E. F. Hatfield, Ninth Annual Report, pp. 6-8.

would spend his mornings in prayer and supplication--and in the afternoon distribute his tracts with "an assurance that I was not alone, neither going in my own strength."[46] When he visited the poor--ignorant and often without a Bible, let alone money to purchase a regular church pew--he must have seemed indeed a minister of God.[47] If the tract visitor was moreover the means of reforming a drunkard or immoral person, his status in that family was even greater.

> O could you have witnessed with what breathless anxiety his wife and sister, who constitute all his family, hung on my lips one evening as I labored with him for two hours . . . could you see with what cordiality they hail my entrance to their humble apartment, you would indeed realize that great are the responsibilities of a tract visitor. Never before have I so fully realized that I might, if I was faithful in my visitations, be hailed as an angel of mercy by some brokenhearted, disconsolate wife. . . . I returned to my room with my mind heavily burdened.[48]

Finney's radical doctrines drastically altered the New York City Tract Society's distribution methods, its collective self-image as well as the self-image of the individual tract visitor. But the revolution did not end here. The new method of systematically visiting the entire city began gradually to help change the social attitudes and consciousness of

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[46]Report of a tract visitor, N.Y.C.T.S., Ninth Annual Report, p. 31.

[47]As one tract distributor wrote: "Never until I became a tract distributor, did I feel so strongly the responsibilities resting on the followers of Christ. O that we might feel that there is nothing worth living for but the luxury of doing good." N.Y.C.T.S., Seventh Annual Report, p. 19.

[48]N.Y.C.T.S., Ninth Annual Report, p. 18.

the distributors and of the Society as a whole. By deciding to canvass the entire city, by visiting all groups and all sections, the City Tract Society had broken with the traditional methods and objects of religious charity. Previously, as we have noted, religious groups had limited themselves to certain well-defined groups within society. By systematically invading every section of the city, however, the Society's members soon became experienced observers of the city's social and economic conditions; almost in spite of themselves, they were drawn into New York's growing complexity. By the end of the 1830's the City Tract Society was no longer simply a subdivision of the American Tract Society participating as did rural Christians in the revivals and pietistic reforms of the times; it was rapidly becoming a peculiarly urban institution involved in the specific problems of a great nineteenth century city.

One inevitable result of the membership's decision to distribute tracts systematically throughout the city was their discovery of urban poverty. By 1835, tract distributors were regularly visiting slum families.[49] Their first reaction, as in the case of a distributor in the city's seventh ward, was one of horror at such poverty and

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[49]That year the Society's paid city missionaries, for the first time, included visiting the poor and distributing charity as one of their regular duties. J. B. Horton, "Report for the Seventh Ward," N.Y.C.T.S., Eighth Annual Report, p. 23; T. T. Pond, "Report for the Eleventh Ward," N.Y.C.T.S., Eighth Annual Report, p. 37; John H. Bulin, "Report for the Thirteenth Ward," N.Y.C.T.S., Eighth Annual Report, p. 40.

ignorance. "In visiting the abodes of the sick and afflicted this past month, I have witnessed an increased amount of wretchedness. Almost every-day brings me in contact with cases so appalling and distressing that it requires a nerve of steel to prevent the mind and body from sinking under perpetual excitement."[50] They found ramshackle buildings housing as many as seventy persons, streets crowded with children who neither worked nor attended school, their parents poverty-stricken, drunken, and illiterate. "To see their degradation," as one distributor wrote, "perfectly astonished me."[51] Concerned, visitors wrote touchingly of women seeking to survive in unheated and unfurnished garrets, of children barefoot and hungry. Some dedicated their efforts towards aiding the destitute Negro population of the city. Others established night schools to teach the freedmen to read and write. By the mid-1830's, many tract distributors were working exclusively in slum neighborhoods.[52]

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[50]T. T. Pond, city missionary for the eleventh ward, N.Y.C.T.S., Ninth Annual Report, p. 30.

[51]Ibid., pp. 15, 23-25; N.Y.C.T.S., Eighth Annual Report, pp. 18, 23, 34-35.

[52]In March of 1835, William Bradford, one of the Society's city missionaries, wrote of his systematic visitations and distribution of charity, "the distributors felt this to be the only system by which they could effectively preach the Gospel to the poor and destitute of this populous city." N.Y.C.T.S., Eighth Annual Report, pp. 15, 34-35.

The managers and workers of the City Tract Society had not anticipated or intended so deep an involvement with the needs of the poor. Indeed, when first organizing their city-wide distribution program in the winter and spring of 1829, they had envisioned it as but one more evangelical effort to prepare the world for Christ's coming. Throughout the 1830's they continued to think in terms of visiting and converting all New Yorkers, not simply the poor. Conditions in the city, however, and the internal logic of the City Tract Society's organization, resulted in their becoming increasingly involved in the distribution of temporal charity. As evangelical American Christians, the managers and distributors could not accept the traditional irreligion and anti-clericalism of the urban poor. The more they learned of poverty, the more time, money, and effort they devoted to bringing them within the fold of middle-class American Protestantism.

This personal involvement with the poor followed, in part, from what many distributors felt was the spiritual neglect of the poor by the city's clergymen and churches. Ministers would simply not visit the poor when requested to, the Society complained in its annual report for 1835, even when the person was a Christian and on the brink of death.[53] Even if the established churches had been willing to work among the poor and largely unchurched New Yorkers, there

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[53] Ibid., p. 35. Supra, fn. 43.

were not enough churches to accommodate all the city's adults. Even more important in discouraging church membership among the poor were expensive pew rentals and the customary pretentiousness of clothing worn to church; the poor could afford neither rentals nor elegant clothing.[54] But the most significant of the City Tract Society's criticisms of New York's churches was their failure to actively seek out those in need of salvation. One hundred thousand New Yorkers and transients lived outside regular church membership, and these, the Society warned, were daily sinking into "the blackness of darkness."[55]

As the tract visitors became increasingly familiar with the city's slums, they realized that their inhabitants would never become members of the city's regular churches. They began, accordingly, to organize Sunday schools, weekly and bi-monthly Bible classes and prayer meetings for the inhabitants of the worst tenements. Often they were amazed at their own success. A visitor in the Fifth Ward, who had established a prayer meeting for the seventy tenants of the infamous Arcade apartment house, reported that his work had been so successful that the tenants had requested him to begin a Bible class as well. "A moral change has evidently taken place in this colony," he reported. "This month we

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[54]Such complaints are found in every annual report of the N.Y.C.T.S.

[55]Rev. E. F. Hatfield, "Anniversary Sermon," N.Y.C.T.S., Ninth Annual Report, p. 8.

report two hopeful conversions as the result of this labor . . . ."[56] By this time the City Tract Society regularly listed the number of conversions in the city which they attributed to tract distribution and compared their success to that of the regular churches. "Compare then the cost of the tract system with the cost of the support of any of the principal churches, and we may judge in some measure of the economy of the plan."[57]

By the mid-1830's, then, they had begun to see the conversion of the urban poor as an important task and their Society as a real link between the city's churches and the poor. The annual reports frequently referred to Christ's assertion: "and the poor have the Gospel preached to them." The Society, as an Albany clergyman testified at their annual meeting in 1835,

> goes to the people. It really flies across the great gulf which they would never pass. It goes to the sick, the infirm, the bedridden, the aged, the stupid, the ignorant and careless, the infidel, the scoffer, the hardened and the tender-hearted.[58]

Inevitably, the Society began to go among the poor armed with food, money, and clothing as well as with tracts and prayers. At first such charity was distributed informally by individual visitors; the annual report for 1833 contains one of the first such incidents. A tract distributor,

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[56] N.Y.C.T.S., Tenth Annual Report, p. 35.

[57] The Reverend Kirk (no first name given), "Anniversary Sermon," N.Y.C.T.S., Tenth Annual Report, pp. 8-9.

[58] N.Y.C.T.S., Seventh Annual Report, p. 50.

visiting a crowded city tenement, came upon a man, sick and confined to his bed. His wife, her time taken up with caring for her husband and three children, could not work to support the family. The rent was due. They had pawned all their possessions and could not buy food for the day. "I have now no prospect but starvation and death," the man declared. The distributor paid his rent and brought food and clothing for the family. That year, the City Tract Society secretary concluded the annual report with the simple statement: "The Poor and The Sick have in very many instances been sought out and their wants supplied."[59]

With each year the City Tract Society became increasingly involved in distributing such temporal goods along with its religious literature, prayers and exhortations. It authorized tract visitors to pay rent, to bring food and clothing to the destitute and to find jobs for the unemployed. In 1834 tract distributors reported supplying clothing to Sunday school children and bringing fuel and food to poor families. A number of the conscientious visitors began assuming tasks which would have seemed not unfamiliar to a twentieth century social worker. One visitor, for example, "adopted" a German immigrant family forced through poverty to live in a damp and unhealthy cellar apartment.

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[59]Throughout 1832 and 1833, most of the Society's charitable work was carried out in an extremely random fashion. The Society apparently made no attempt to organize either sources of charitable aid, or their search for those who needed aid. N.Y.C.T.S., Sixth Annual Report, pp. 13, 5, 20, 27.

One of the children had already died and the parents were ill. The visitor provided food, fuel, and money. Another tract distributor sent a pair of spectacles to an old woman to read her tracts with, a third a dress to a widow so that she could attend church services. Increasingly this aspect of their work absorbed the time and effort of the distributors. J. B. Horton, for example, Superintendent of the Seventh Ward, had come to the clearly formulated position that charity as well as prayer was necessary for those miserable families he visited. One must, he concluded, "do something more than say 'Be ye warmed, and be ye clothed.'"[60]

At first the City Tract Society reported the charitable acts of its members without comment. Its tone clearly implied that these were simply the spontaneous acts of Christians who found their fellow creatures in need and hoped by thus supplying their temporal needs to secure their spiritual salvation as well. Significantly, all these early objects of charity were examples of what contemporaries would call the worthy poor: the sick, the aged, the widowed and the orphaned who suffered through no fault of their own. Within the religious context of the time, these poor were placed on earth by God to strengthen their own character through suffering and perhaps more importantly to provide the Christian

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[60]N.Y.C.T.S., Seventh Annual Report, pp. 1-14, 30-34, 41. N.Y.C.T.S., Eighth Annual Report, pp. 15, 23-24, 34-35; N.Y.C.T.S., Ninth Annual Report, pp. 15, 23-25, 30; N.Y.C.T.S., Tenth Annual Report, pp. 22-25, 36, 46-47, 54-59, 64-65, 71; N.Y.C.T.S., Eleventh Annual Report, pp. 80-87.

with an opportunity for charitable acts. (Significantly as well, these early examples were all culled from groups basically in sympathy with the Christian values of contemporary society, and thus relatively receptive to the visitors' conversion efforts.)

But gradually both the objects of charity and the tone of the Society's reports changed. By 1835 and 1836, the tract distributors came increasingly to blame poverty on the deliberate acts of the poor themselves, and especially on the sin of intemperance. In 1835, tract distributors began a census of the number of saloons in their districts. Amzi Camp, Superintendent of the poverty-stricken Sixth Ward, reported in horrified tones counting over three hundred saloons in his district, forty on a single street.[61] One reported finding five saloons for every 168 adults, another fifty families in one neighborhood and twenty saloons. "In almost every house I found some intoxicated persons." Increasingly the tract distributors came to correlate poverty with intemperance. "Both parents were intemperate, of course very poor . . . ." "The husband of this worthy woman was a drunkard--he died a drunkard, and the drunkard's poverty and the drunkard's curse came upon his family . . . ." "There are in my district ten groceries, producing poverty, wickedness, and death in the families around."[62]

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[61] N.Y.C.T.S., Eighth Annual Report, p. 14.

[62] Ibid., p. 15; N.Y.C.T.S., Ninth Annual Report, pp. 17, 20, 24; N.Y.C.T.S., Tenth Annual Report, p. 41. This pessimistic concern with alcoholism increased rapidly

Gradually the City Tract Society's early optimism faded. The objects of their efforts were no longer a troop of young boys seeking relaxation in a Sunday ball game or an artisan found working on the Sabbath. Now the Society worked among drunkards, among a slum population that lived in wretched garrets and hovels.[63] The City Tract Society's attitude towards the swiftly coming millennium, towards its own city and towards the poor began ever so slightly to change. The tract distributors still concerned themselves primarily with the conversion of the individual soul. Their efforts, despite their charitable work, remained centered in the spreading of the Gospel. They still compared their work with that of rural tract distributors. But occasionally a note of concern, almost of despair, would creep into their reports. How could the Society convert this throng of destitute, often alien, persons? How could they relieve their needs, temporal and spiritual, and bring them into the community of respectable, Protestant Americans?

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after 1834-1835. Before this date, the Society had seemed confident of converting even the worst alcoholics and had viewed alcoholism as a moral and individual rather than a social problem.

[63]N.Y.C.T.S., Ninth Annual Report, p. 17. In 1837, for instance, a woman visitor, whose district was a Negro slum, wrote: "When I first approached the district . . . my spirit sunk within me, regarding the field altogether inaccessible to a tract visitor. . . . I commenced with trembling." N.Y.C.T.S., Eleventh Annual Report, p. 27.

Yet religion continued to hold out hope. In the mid-thirties the City Tract Society and its membership still believed that God's grace could remake their city. The concern of the Tract Society remained the religious conversion of the individual. This was the path through which the millennium would come. It is these efforts to convert all of New York's inhabitants that dominate the annual reports and statements of individual distributors through 1836.

CHAPTER V

A desire to convert all Americans to evangelical Protestantism, as we have seen in the history of the New York City Tract Society, was ultimately--if indirectly--one source of a growing awareness of the city's poor and the quality of their lives. Tract distribution provided one avenue toward an understanding of the human problems created by New York's growth into a world metropolis.

The zealousness of this generation provided as well other avenues to the same end. Not only did pious New Yorkers feel it their duty to convert all who would listen to their appeals; they were convinced that sin in any guise should not be tolerated. From this conviction grew what in retrospect is perhaps the most colorful--and to contemporaries most extreme--effort to advance the millennium. This was the crusade waged by pious New York women against prostitution and immorality. Like tract distribution, however, this crusade against the sins of the flesh created an organization in whose history more secular aims and methods were to succeed the millennial hopes of the 1830's.

In the spring of 1834, a group of earnest New York women established the New York Female Moral Reform Society.

Its purpose was the reform and ultimate conversion of New York's prostitutes and, more generally, the advocacy of moral perfection throughout American society. In this Victorian generation, such a society represented necessarily an extreme wing of evangelical Protestantism. Its leaders, converts and personal acquaintances of Charles G. Finney, were motivated by the revivalist's insistence that all sin, even the oldest, could and must be driven from the land. Every true Christian, they believed, was bound to work toward this goal. Their society was clearly religious in origin. Its field of operation, moreover, was only partially New York, for its members felt that prostitution in their city could be checked only by awakening rural America to a need for vigorous enforcement of the Seventh Commandment--thus drying up the source of supply for New York's brothels. An interest in the physical well-being, or even in the religious conversion, of New York's poor had as such no place in the goals of the Society's founders.

Yet within four years of its organization, the Female Moral Reform Society had become one of the city's more active eleemosynary institutions. Its members and their paid agents systematically visited the poor, distributed food and clothing, and sought jobs for the unemployed. This transformation, like the similar metamorphosis of the New York City Tract Society, grew out of a desire to convert all men and the motivation this conviction provided--creating situations in which at least some respectable New

Yorkers came into contact with the poor of their own city. This work with the city's poor grew increasingly prominent in the Society's program as the unattainability of their original utopian goal--the conversion of New York's prostitutes and the purification of American sexual morality--became ever more apparent.

The history of the Moral Reform Society demonstrates with peculiar clarity another and comparatively neglected aspect of American reform movements--the new role of women. Women played an important part in all of the religious reform groups of this evangelical generation; they were the workers, the fund-raisers, the emotionally committed supporters of tract and Bible societies, of Sunday schools and Dorcas societies. In these activities, the women of America's new middle class found ways to expand the roles traditionally allotted them--and express as well as normally unspoken hostility toward the male and his dominant role.

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Charles G. Finney began his first New York revival in the fall and winter of 1829; it continued into the spring of 1830. That same spring a youthful Princeton divinity student, John R. McDowall, arrived in New York City to spend the summer as a volunteer city missionary for the American Tract Society.[1] In these two, not

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[1]John R. McDowall, the son of a minister in Fredericksburg, Lenox County, Midland District, Upper Canada, was born February 20, 1801. He attended Schenectady

unrelated, events lay the origins of the American Female Guardian Society, its nation-wide moral reform crusade, and its long-lived city mission work.

Undoubtedly influenced by its New York City auxiliary, the American Tract Society sent McDowall to the Five Points, already notorious for its crowded tenements, its crime rate--and its numerous and sordid brothels. McDowall, assisted by his brother, a fellow divinity student, visited tenements, distributed Bibles and tracts, established a Sunday school, and gave temperance lectures. Eventually the brothers even began to visit the Five Points houses of prostitution, leading prayer meetings when they could and remonstrating with both the women and their customers.

Deeply moved by his summer experiences, McDowall decided not to return to Princeton that fall, but to remain in New York as a city missionary. Although he lacked any formal sponsorship or financial support, McDowall began to organize Sunday school and Bible classes in the city's prisons and Alms-House. The dynamic young man quickly found supporters. A number of respectable New York women, many converted during Finney's winter revival, came to McDowall's aid; they taught in his Sunday schools and Bible classes, visited the prisons and hospitals, led prayer

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College and then Princeton. While at Princeton, 1828-1829, McDowall was active in a number of evangelical and missionary societies. Joshua Leavitt, Memoir and Select Remains of the Late Reverend John R. M'Dowall (New York, 1838), pp. 1-89, 99.

meetings and distributed religious literature. These volunteer workers gradually became interested in the "affecting" problems of the female convicts.[2] Most of these, McDowall's visitors soon discovered, were prostitutes. Upon their release from prison or hospital, no honest occupation offered an alternative to their old ways; their life revolved around the brothel, the prison--and the hospital. In 1831, hoping to disrupt this vicious cycle, and hoping as well to provide an opportunity for exerting some Christian influence upon these lost souls, a number of McDowall's female supporters--aided by such active and generous evangelicals as Arthur and Lewis Tappan--established the New York Magdalen Society and opened a "House of Refuge." The house would serve, they hoped, as a stopping place for the penitent harlot. Here she might be subjected to the benevolent influence of religion and at the same time taught new skills; at last, she might assume a responsible place in society.[3]

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[2] Ibid.; cf. New York Magdalen Society, First Annual Report of the Executive Committee of the New York Magdalen Society, Instituted January 1, 1830 (New York, 1831), p. 5. Indeed, interest in Magdalen work existed as early as the late 1820's when a number of active Christians had begun to visit and lead Sunday school classes at the Penitentiary. It was with this group that McDowall and his brother began to work in 1830. McDowall's Journal, II (December, 1834), 89.

[3] McDowall's Journal, II (December, 1834), 89. The relation of this early Magdalen Society to the evangelical movement generally and to the N.Y.C.T.S. specifically can be seen in its first list of officers and directors. The Society's first president was Arthur Tappan; its directors included A. G. Phelps, William Colgate, Thomas Stokes, George P. Shipman, and Moses Allen. New York Magdalen Society, First Annual Report . . . 1830, inside title page and p. 7.

McDowall and his supporters had established their home with little or no publicity and--consequently--without criticism from even the most fastidious. This pleasant state ended abruptly when McDowall published his first annual report as missionary of the Magdalen Society. The young man proclaimed indignantly that there were some ten thousand prostitutes in New York; many who frequented brothels, he asserted, belonged to prominent and seemingly respectable families. Indeed no sector of American society, McDowall insisted, from the most pretentious to the humblest, was untainted by impurity and lewdness. The situation cried aloud for reform. True Christians, McDowall concluded, must wage a thoroughgoing crusade against violators of the Seventh Commandment.[4]

The report shocked and irritated respectable New Yorkers--not only by its facts, but by its tone of righteous indignation. McDowall immediately became the target of an indignation equally righteous. The young ex-Princetonian was, it seemed clear to many New Yorkers, an irresponsible scandalmonger, an obscene seeker after notoriety.[5] Hostility quickly spread from McDowall to the Society he had founded; its female members were subjected to abuse and threatened

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[4]John R. McDowall, Magdalen Report, reprinted McDowall's Journal, II (May, 1834), 33-38.

[5]Flora L. Northrup, The Record of a Century (New York, 1934), pp. 13-14; cf. McDowall's Defence, I, No. 1 (July, 1836), 3; The Trial of the Reverend John Robert McDowall by the Third Presbytery of New York in Feb., March, and April, 1836 (New York, 1836).

with social ostracism. The Society quickly retreated; denying responsibility for the report, the ladies closed their home and disbanded their organization.[6]

But McDowall would not retreat. Seeking to rally support, he published a second report, Magdalen Facts, reaffirming and enlarging upon his original statements. In this report, McDowall called not simply for increased zeal in converting prostitutes, but also for a general and uncompromising moral crusade, one which would ruthlessly excise sin from all of American society.[7] McDowall began as well to publish a monthly, McDowall's Journal, its purpose to urge what was from the first an essentially rural audience to turn to God, to purify their own hearts, and to work toward the moral perfection of American society.[8]

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[6] Thomas Hastings, Sr., Missionary Labors through a Series of Years among Fallen Women by the New York Magdalen Society (New York, 1870), p. 15.

[7] John R. McDowall, Magdalen Facts (New York, 1832).

[8] In the first issue of his Journal, McDowall made a programmatic statement of his purpose in an "Address to Pious and Benevolent Ladies in the City and State of New York, in the United States . . . October, 1832." "The principal design of the Journal," McDowall wrote, "is to expose public immorality, to elicit public sentiment and to devise and carry into effect the means of preventing licentiousness." McDowall's Journal, I (January, 1833), 1, 4. Only two volumes of McDowall's Journal were published, covering the period January, 1833, to December, 1834. A New York State Grand Jury condemned the magazine as "an obscene and demoralizing publication," a decision applauded by respectable New York religious journals. William Goodell, "Address at the Convention of Patrons and Donors of John Robert McDowall, Clinton Hall, May 12, 1836," printed in McDowall's Defence, I, No. 1 (July, 1836), 3.

To secure financial support, McDowall urged the creation of local, church-centered reform societies. Within the year, a number of such groups had been founded in New York, connected for the most part with the city's more evangelical churches. (A number of these had been themselves newly founded in response to the enthusiasm of Finney's revivals.) These groups hoped, of course, to reform prostitutes, but as well to warn other God-fearing Christians of the pervasiveness of such sin and the need to oppose it. Prostitution was after all only one of many offenses against the Seventh Commandment; adultery, lewd thoughts and language, and bawdy literature were equally sinful in the eyes of God. McDowall's Journal served as a vehicle for such warnings and admonitions. After nearly a year of silent support for McDowall's Journal, the female members of the several moral reform societies felt sufficiently numerous and confident to organize a second city-wide moral reform society--and to open a new house of refuge.[9]

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[9]Between the demise of the New York Magdalen Society and the organization of the New York Female Moral Reform Society (hereinafter referred to as N.Y.F.M.R.S.), McDowall was connected--as agent--with a third society, the New York Female Benevolent Society, which he had helped found in February of 1833. McDowall's exposés and a quarrel concerning the disposal of certain funds, however, led to McDowall's dismissal as agent in 1833. The Society then devoted itself principally to rescue work within the city, operating a "home" first at 86th Street and Fifth Avenue and later (Inwood House) at 189th Street and the Hudson River. Female Benevolent Society of the City of New York, First Annual Report of the . . . Presented January 13, 1834 (New York, 1834); Goodell, McDowall's Defence; Hastings, Missionary Labors, p. 15.

Thus on a spring evening in May, 1834, a small group of women met at the revivalistic Third Free Presbyterian Church to found the New York Female Moral Reform Society.[10] Its founders and many of its active members--or their fathers or husbands--were closely associated with Charles G. Finney. Mrs. Finney was the Society's first directress. After she moved with her husband to Oberlin in 1835, leadership was assumed by Mrs. William Green, the wife of one of Finney's closest supporters. The two clergymen instrumental in the founding of the organization--Dirck C. Lansing and John Ingersoll--were disciples of Finney and well known for their revival enthusiasm. The Tappan brothers, so active in their advocacy of Finney's evangelical goals, acted for many years as sponsors and financial advisors to the ladies.[11]

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[10]"Minutes of the Meeting of the Ladies' Society for the Observance of the Seventh Commandment held in Chatham Street Chapel, May 12, 1834," in ledger book entitled "Constitution and Minutes of the New York Female Moral Reform Society, May 1834 to July, 1839," deposited in the archives of the American Female Guardian Society (hereinafter referred to as A.F.G.S.), Woodycrest Avenue, Bronx, New York. (The Society has the executive committee minutes from May, 1835-June, 1847, and from January 7, 1852-February 18, 1852.) See also McDowall's Journal, II (January, 1834), 6-7.

[11]For early officers and managers, see McDowall's Journal, II (January, 1834), 6-7, and II (September, 1834), 65. For a list of early "male advisors" to the N.Y.F.M.R.S., see Leavitt, Memoir, p. 248. For the connection between the Society, its supporters and Finney, see L. Nelson Nichols and Allen Knight Chalmers, History of the Broadway Tabernacle of New York City, pp. 49-67, and McLoughlin, Modern Revivalism, pp. 50-53. McDowall's own connection with Finney and his New York City supporters was apparently quite close. Tappan paid McDowall's expenses when he first came to work

With such close ties to Finney and his new theology--and the commitment it implied to Christian action--the ladies of the Moral Reform Society represented an extreme wing of the evangelical movement. Although women, they were not content to remain at home, secure simply in the regeneration of their own souls, satisfied with educating their children in the ways of piety and with praying for the millennium. Finney's preaching had convinced them that silence in the face of sin amounted to complicity. Like the New York abolitionists--many, of course, Finneyites and some such as Leavitt and the Tappans also supporters of the moral reform cause--they felt themselves unable any longer to compromise with the devil; sin must be assailed wherever and in whatever form it existed. Condemnation by the polite and dead-of-soul could not be permitted to affect such resolves. Sexual immorality seemed to pollute all levels of society, and though it was a forbidden subject for respectable women, they felt duty-bound to oppose it vocally and absolutely. As they stated in the first edition of their moral reform journal:

> As Christians we must view it in the light of God's word--we must enter into his feelings on the subject--engage in its overthrow just in the manner he would have us; and we shall feel we ought to have

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with the American Tract Society. Anson G. Phelps, as a member of the N.Y.S.P.P., first interested McDowall in visiting the penitentiary and establishing a Sunday school there. When McDowall was finally ordained, it was at the Finneyite Spring Street Church. Leavitt, Memoir, pp. 99, 151, 192.

> done in the great day of judgment. We must look away from all worldly opinions or influences, for they are perverted and wrong; and individually act only as in the presence of God.[12]

Seen in these transcendent terms, their duty was inescapable.

.2.

The program adopted by the Female Moral Reform Society in the spring of 1834 embraced two quite different, though to the Society's founders quite consistent, modes of attack. One was absolutist and millennial, an attempt through publications to convert the entire nation to perfect purity in morals. At the same time, however, the Society sponsored a parallel and somewhat more pragmatic program, one aimed at converting and reforming the lewd and presumably lost women of the city. Though strikingly dissimilar in method and geographic scope, both efforts were unified by an uncompromising zeal for driving sin from America and promoting the millennium.

The vehicle for the Society's crusade to purify all America was their monthly journal, the Advocate of Moral Reform. In December of 1834, shortly after the establishment of their organization, the ladies acquired McDowall's Journal. Renaming it the Advocate for Moral Reform, they made it their official journal.[13] Within three years, the

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[12] Advocate of Moral Reform, I (January-February, 1835), 6.

[13] The Society, in taking over the Journal, hired McDowall as general agent and missionary. N.Y.F.M.R.S., "Executive Committee Minutes, December 31, 1834." See also Advocate of Moral Reform, I (January-February, 1835), 1.

Advocate had become one of the nation's most widely-read evangelical papers, and by 1837 boasted 16,500 regular subscribers. Besides these paying readers, the ladies gratuitously distributed thousands of copies annually and with them countless tracts, hoping to saturate the countryside with moral reform literature. By 1838, they could remark that the publication of the Advocate was probably their most important activity.[14]

The female editors of the Advocate remained true to the program enunciated by John McDowall in 1832. The Advocate, like McDowall's Journal, openly addressed itself to the problems of illicit sexuality and the circulation of lewd and suggestive literature, art and songs.[15] Country readers were warned again and again that both prostitution and seduction were far more common than they imagined, that the principal source of New York's harlots were country girls seduced and abandoned.[16] Mothers were entreated to educate their children in a knowledge of the Seventh Commandment and to permit neither sons nor daughters to leave

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[14]N.Y.F.M.R.S., "Executive Committee Minutes, June 6 and June 25, 1835, June (n.d.) 1836"; N.Y.F.M.R.S., The Guardian or Fourth Annual Report of the New York Female Moral Reform Society presented May 9, 1838 (New York, 1838), pp. 4-6.

[15]"Our doctrine," the ladies pointed out, "is that to root out the evil we must expose it." Advocate of Moral Reform, I (January-February, 1835), pp. 1-2.

[16]See, for example, Advocate of Moral Reform, I (October and November, 1835), passim.

home without being warned of the dangers awaiting them.[17] Column after closely printed column was filled with stories illustrating the perils besetting the virtue of hapless and innocent country girls.

The forthright details (salaciously explicit seduction scenes, for example) in some of these incidents were shocking enough to contemporaries; far more controversial, however, was the Society's decision to continue the factual exposés which McDowall had begun in his journal. McDowall, to the consternation of many respectable New Yorkers, had urged readers to inform him of men they knew to be guilty of visiting brothels or seducing innocent girls--especially men prominent in their community's religious or public life. McDowall, in printing these letters, left little doubt in his readers' minds as to the transgressor's identity; he used the initials of such "hypocrites" and provided the names of the towns or counties in which they lived.[18] The lady managers of the Society decided, when adopting McDowall's Journal, to continue such articles and letters.

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[17] Advocate of Moral Reform, II (January, 1836), 3; Advocate of Moral Reform, III (February 15, 1837), 211; Advocate of Moral Reform, IV (January 15, 1838), 14, and IV (April 15, 1838), 59.

[18] See, for example, McDowall's Journal, I (March, 1833), 20; McDowall's Journal, I (October, 1833), 75-76; McDowall's Journal, I (November, 1833), 83-84; McDowall's Journal, I (December, 1833), 103; McDowall's Journal, II (January, 1834), 7-8; McDowall's Journal, II (April, 1834), 25-28. Public reaction, especially, one assumes, among certain groups in society, was violent and personal. McDowall reported receiving countless obscene and threatening letters. McDowall's Journal, I (December, 1833), 103.

"We think it proper," they stated defiantly in the first issue of the Advocate:

> even to expose names, for the same reason that the names of thieves and robbers are published, that the public may know them and govern themselves accordingly. We mean to let the licentious know, that if they are not ashamed of their debasing vice, we will not be ashamed to expose them. Whenever we can possess ourselves of well-authenticated facts in connection with names, we shall soon let it be known what stand we shall take in relation to this vice.[19]

As converts of Finney, the ladies were convinced that sin existed only because the saved had not struggled and prayed against it. Sin, the evangelist had declared again and again, existed only on man's sufferance, because he had not fought against it. But if men did pray and struggle, God would, Finney promised, certainly bless their efforts; perfection and the millennium were within reach. Thus the ladies of the New York Moral Reform Society and many of their supporters throughout Greater New England were convinced of their individual, immediate responsibility to fight sin in all its manifestations, even those of adultery and fornication. "Believing the work of moral reform will be one of the mighty engines to usher in the Millennial

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[19]See, for example: Advocate of Moral Reform, I (March, 1835), 13-14; Advocate of Moral Reform, I (April, 1835), 18, 20; Advocate of Moral Reform, I (October, 1835), 80; Advocate of Moral Reform, I (November, 1835), 85-86; Advocate of Moral Reform, I (December, 1835), 92; Advocate of Moral Reform, II (January, 1836), 3-4; Advocate of Moral Reform, II (February, 1836), 17-19; Advocate of Moral Reform, III (January 15, 1837), passim; Advocate of Moral Reform, III (February 15, 1837), passim.

day," the Westover, Massachusetts, Female Moral Reform Society stated in their first Annual Report,

> is it not our duty by our prayer, and our influence, to aid those females who are pioneers in the work, and like Aaron and Hur to stay up their hands?[20]

This acceptance of the individual's responsibility to constantly fight sin underlay, as well, the strident and militant statements of New York's early moral reform workers. At their fourth annual meeting, for example, the managers of the New York Female Moral Reform Society commented upon the motives and actions of their organization's founders. "They could sleep no longer," the ladies asserted,

> over the vice and misery with which they were everywhere surrounded. In the name of Jehovah the banner of female purity was put up, and its adherents marched out to meet the great sin, which had so long bid defiance to the armies of the living God.

"Thousands," they continued in predicting the early success of their movement, "in different parts of the land, are assisting to carry out the work, and the seal of God's approbation has been visibly set upon it."[21] It was this pietistic commitment which sanctioned the Society's defiance of customary social taboos; absolute moral imperatives made it

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[20]Westover, Massachusetts, Female Moral Reform Society, Annual Report, 1837, reprinted Advocate of Moral Reform, IV (January 1, 1838), 7. See similar sentiments in a letter from the South Deerfield, Massachusetts, Female Moral Reform Society to the N.Y.F.M.R.S. and in another from a town in Orange County, New York, both printed in Advocate of Moral Reform, III (January 15, 1837), 194, 195.

[21]N.Y.F.M.R.S., The Guardian, p. 3.

possible, indeed necessary, for the ladies to speak the unspeakable.

Not surprisingly, the great majority of the Advocate's subscribers and correspondents lived in that belt of New York counties termed by contemporaries the "burnt-over district." From its inception, the New York Female Moral Reform Society had wooed the pious women of New York State and New England. In June of 1835, the Society's executive committee hired a minister to travel through western New York "in behalf of Moral Reform Causes."[22] The following year the committee sent two emissaries--the editor of the Advocate and a paid female agent--on a thousand-mile tour of the New England states. Visiting women's groups and churches in Brattleboro, Deerfield, Northampton, Pittsfield, the Stockbridges and many other towns, the ladies rallied their sisters to the moral reform cause and visited or organized some forty-one auxiliaries. Each succeeding summer saw similar trips by paid agents and by managers of the Society.[23] By 1839, the New York Female Moral Reform Society boasted some 445 female auxiliaries, principally in greater New England.[24]

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[22]N.Y.F.M.R.S., "Executive Committee Minutes, June 25, 1835," p. 38.

[23]N.Y.F.M.R.S., "Executive Committee Minutes, October 4, 1836, and May 22, 1837, and September 11, 1839," pp. 59, 85, 4-7. Indeed, as early as 1833 a substantial portion of John McDowall's support seemed to come from rural areas. See, for example, McDowall's Journal, I (August, 1833), 59-62.

[24]N.Y.F.M.R.S., "Executive Committee Minutes, October 4, 1838," p. 118; Northrup, Record, p. 22.

The numbers and financial strength of the auxiliaries had clearly begun to reshape the structure of the Moral Reform Society. Its dependence upon auxiliaries outside the city was intensified by the financial difficulties the New York Society faced following the Panic of 1837.[25] With many of their staunchest city supporters bankrupt or in straitened circumstances, the ladies were forced more and more frequently to turn to their auxiliaries for help. The Advocate regularly printed appeals for money, and the executive committee began to distribute special circulars asking for contributions.[26] It was during this post-depression period as well that the executive committee first suggested that the auxiliaries be invited to send representatives to the New York Society's annual meeting, a proposal adopted at their February 4, 1838, meeting.[27] The following year, the Society's executive committee, recognizing its dependence upon the auxiliaries, voted to reorganize as a national society with the New York group as simply one of its constituent societies.[28]

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[25]For the effect of the Panic on New York's evangelical Congregationalists, see Nichols and Chalmers, History of the Broadway Tabernacle, pp. 67-72.

[26]N.Y.F.M.R.S., "Executive Committee Minutes, October, 1837 to February, 1838," passim.

[27]N.Y.F.M.R.S., "Executive Committee Minutes, February 4, 1838," p. 102.

[28]N.Y.F.M.R.S., "Executive Committee Minutes, May 10, 1839," pp. 1-3; N.Y.F.M.R.S., "Quarterly Meeting, July, 1839." Power within the new national organization was so divided that the president and board of managers were members of the

At the very time that the Society's managers launched their uncompromising war against the licentiousness which seemed to pervade the Greater New England countryside, they began, as well, their more sharply focussed campaign against New York City's houses of prostitution. Their attack was a spiritual one, its shock troops city missionaries, its weapons prayer and exhortation. In the fall of 1834, the Society appointed John McDowall as agent and missionary and soon hired two additional missionaries to assist him in preaching and distributing tracts and Bibles throughout the city. Early in 1835, the Society divided New York into districts for regular visitation.[29] They received, moreover, additional aid when the gentleman's moral reform society of the Dey Street Church hired a fourth missionary to assist in their work.[30]

These missionaries visited the female wards of the almshouse, the city hospital and jails, leading prayer meetings and distributing Bibles and tracts. Far more of their time, however, was spent in systematically visiting--or, to be more accurate, descending upon--brothels, praying

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N.Y.F.M.R.S. while the vice presidents were chosen from the rural auxiliaries. The annual meeting was held in New York City, the quarterly meetings in one of the towns of Greater New England.

[29]Advocate of Moral Reform, I (January-February, 1835), 4; Northrup, Record, p. 19.

[30]Advocate of Moral Reform, I (August, 1835), 56; N.Y.F.M.R.S., "Executive Committee Minutes, June 6, 1835," p. 37.

with and exhorting both the inmates and their patrons. The Society's missionaries went everywhere, from the exclusive brothels on the west side, boasting elegant interiors and a distinguished carriage trade, to the filthy and drunken houses of the Five Points and Corlear's Hook. The missionaries were especially fond of arriving at these houses early Sunday morning--catching women and customers as they awoke on the traditionally sacred day. The missionaries would announce their arrival by a vigorous reading of Bible passages, with prayer and with song.[31]

The ladies did not depend completely on their paid missionaries for the completion of such tasks; accompanied by pious male volunteers from the city's revival churches, the members of the Female Moral Reform Society themselves invaded the city's hapless brothels. (The executive committee minutes for January of 1835, for example, contain a lengthy discussion of the properly discreet make-up of groups for such active visiting.)[32] The ladies went primarily to pray and to exert moral influence. They were not unaware, however, of the disruptive effect that frequent

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[31]Advocate of Moral Reform, I (March, 1835), 11-12; Advocate of Moral Reform, I (August, 1835), 59; Advocate of Moral Reform, I (November, 1835), 86; N.Y.F.M.R.S., "Executive Committee Minutes, April 30, 1836," p. 54. Interestingly, these pious visitors recorded their most polite receptions at the more expensive houses, while the girls and customers of lower-class, slum brothels met them almost uniformly with curses and threats.

[32]N.Y.F.M.R.S., "Executive Committee Minutes, January 24, 1835," p. 31.

visits of large groups of praying Christians would have upon the business of the brothels. "Companies of pious males or females should," the managers urged in a Circular to the Ladies of the United States,

> visit [such] houses from day to day. . . . This will leave them no peace in their sins--will have the effect of breaking up their houses--will prevent visitors from going there through fear of detection.[33]

The Moral Reform Society also opened, as we have noted, a House of Reception, a refuge for prostitutes seeking to reform. It was not meant to be a home for the morally incapable, a permanent refuge for those seeking to hide from the world. The ladies envisioned their home as a "house of industry" where the errant would be taught new trades and prepared for useful jobs. The Society sought, indeed, to sell the goods produced at the House, first, to cover its expenses and--if a surplus existed--to be deposited for the inmates at New York's Savings Bank. When the ladies felt their repentant charges prepared--both morally and with new skills--to return to society, they attempted to find them jobs with Christian families--and, so far as possible, away from temptation.[34]

Despite this melioristic approach, the ultimate objects of the Reform Society were spiritual, not temporal. Certainly

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[33]Advocate of Moral Reform, I (January-February, 1835), 7.

[34]Advocate of Moral Reform, I (September 1, 1835), 72; Northrup, Record, p. 19.

the causes of prostitution--as the ladies understood them--were varied, ranging from betrayed innocence and inexperience to economic need and moral depravity. But religious conversion was, in every case, a necessary part of a permanent cure. The prostitute lived as an enemy of God; each day without repentance corrupted her further. Only God's redeeming grace could secure her reformation and eternal forgiveness. A partial or temporary reform could often be effected, the ladies admitted, by finding a girl a job or returning her to her family--but only God's grace and a consciously experienced salvation brought true reform.[35] The ladies of the Society strove, therefore, at all times to convert their charges at the House of Refuge. Besides the daily prayers common to Christian homes of the day, the ladies held weekly prayer meetings at the House, prayed for the girls' conversion and--not infrequently--would stop their bi-monthly executive committee meetings when the Holy Spirit seemed near to call their "family" to pray with them.[36]

Despite such pious efforts, however, few prostitutes reformed; fewer still appeared, to their benefactresses, to have experienced the saving grace of conversion. Indeed, the number of inmates at the Society's House of Reception was always small. In March of 1835, for instance, the Executive

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[35] Advocate of Moral Reform, I (April, 1835), 17; Advocate of Moral Reform, I (May, 1835), 35; Advocate of Moral Reform, IV (January 1, 1838), 13.

[36] N.Y.F.M.R.S., "Executive Committee Minutes, December 24, 1834, January 24, 1835, and January 12, 1836."

Committee reported only fourteen women at the House. A year later, total admissions had reached but thirty--only four of whom were considered saved. As late as April, 1836--after almost two years of rescue efforts--the ladies could characterize only four inmates as "serious and industrious."[37]

Almost a year earlier, indeed, the ladies had considered remodeling their House of Reception into a "Stranger's Hotel." By offering temporary lodgings to honest but destitute women they hoped to protect the virtuous from the city's temptations.[38] They did not abandon their House at this time, however, but moved it instead to a more respectable uptown neighborhood, hoping that rural surroundings might be more conducive to reform work.[39] Another year of failure, however, convinced the managers and their executive committee that hopes of reforming the fallen were delusive. The final debacle came in the summer of 1836 when the regular manager of the House left the city because of poor health. In his absence--the ladies reported unhappily--the inmates seized control, and discipline and morality deteriorated precipitously. The lady managers reassembled in the fall to

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[37]Advocate of Moral Reform, I (March, 1835), 11; N.Y.F.M.R.S., "Executive Committee Minutes, April 5, 1836, May 30, 1835," pp. 52, 55.

[38]Northrup, Record, p. 19.

[39]Ibid.

find their refuge in chaos. Bitterly they dismissed the few remaining unruly inmates and closed the building.[40]

While discouraged in its attempts to reform the city's prostitutes, the Society had during these same years become increasingly conscious of New York's peculiar spiritual and material needs.

At the same meeting in which the executive committee decided to close the House of Refuge, it voted to open an employment agency for destitute but honest women, hoping to prevent prostitution by offering the still virtuous an honorable alternative. A few months later, the committee voted to hire two female missionaries to distribute religious tracts to families throughout the city, and a male missionary to visit the poor in the Almshouse and Penitentiary. Most importantly for the future of the organization, in December of 1836, the executive committee constituted itself a visiting committee--each of its

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[40]N.Y.F.M.R.S., "Executive Committee Minutes, October 4, 1836." Actually the N.Y.F.M.R.S. had always felt some ambivalence concerning reformatory work, an ambivalence which corresponded to the growth of the Society's interest in rural moral reform. One of the Society's missionaries, for example, reported that as early as 1834, John McDowall had concluded that the Asylum provided at best a limited approach to moral reform, and that much more could be accomplished through prevention; while in the first issue of the Advocate, the Society's managers depreciated reform work. "Candor obliges us," they wrote, "to state that we have very little hope in efforts to reclaim profligate females. . . . We shall aim to do good by endeavoring to exert a preventative influence . . . ." Advocate of Moral Reform, I (January-February, 1835), 2; Leavitt, Memoir, p. 241.

members agreeing to visit families in the city preaching piety and strict observance of the Seventh Commandment.[41]

The Society thus brought to the city the well-established evangelical and missionary goals and activities of their rural auxiliaries. In one sense they had substituted purification of the urban dweller for the reform of known prostitutes. Yet each of these decisions widened the Society's contact with the destitute and unemployed of the city--though this had been by no means the Society's original intent. Each institutionalized commitment tended to develop a tenacious life of its own--inadvertently projecting the Society ever deeper into the problems of urban poverty. This is demonstrated clearly in the evolution of the Society's employment agency. The work of this agency grew so rapidly that within six months of its founding, the ladies in charge declared themselves unable to cope with the overwhelming number of job applications.[42] So important did the task of finding jobs for unemployed women seem to the executive committee that in June of that same year they voted to drastically change the statement of purpose that appeared in their by-laws to include a statement of their new charitable efforts among the urban poor. "One special object," the amendment explained,

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[41]N.Y.F.M.R.S., "Executive Committee Minutes, October 11, 1836, December 6, 1836, January 19, 1837," pp. 64, 69, 74.

[42]N.Y.F.M.R.S., "Executive Committee Minutes, April 21, 1837," p. 82.

> of this Society shall be to extend the hand of Christian kindness to respectable unprotected females, especially the fatherless and the orphan, and when such shall apply with the proper testimonials an effort shall be made to obtain employment for them in such families as may be safely recommended.

By the early 1840's hundreds of women turned each month to the Society's employment bureau not only for jobs but for aid as well. "The poor," the executive committee commented in 1843, "seemed to regard the Society and rooms a public depot for charity."[43]

Each year the activities of the visiting committee increased as well. Indeed, members of the executive committee spent so much time in visiting that by the spring of 1837 it was deemed proper to pay each committee member a monthly salary. (Twenty-four dollars was the figure agreed upon, no nominal sum at this time.)[44] In 1839, the Female Moral Reform Society requested their male agent to devote the "greater portion" of his time to outdoor visiting and some months later directed another agent, recently appointed, to secure subscriptions for the Advocate in rural areas in New York State, to devote the winter months to missionary work in the city.[45]

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[43]N.Y.F.M.R.S., "Executive Committee Minutes, June 19, 1837, February 1, 1843." The Society did not record how many of these women received jobs through the Society.

[44]N.Y.F.M.R.S., "Executive Committee Minutes, May 22, 1837," p. 85.

[45]A.F.G.S., "Executive Committee Minutes, December 6, 1839, December 10, 1839."

At first the ladies' visiting paralleled that undertaken by the City Tract Society's workers during that organization's early years. Both organizations began their visiting work with the sole object of spreading evangelical religion. Visiting mothers and their children during the day, they left tracts, prayed with these families, and inquired after their spiritual health. The sick, the dying, and the aged received particular attention--as did families with adolescent daughters and adults professing belief in unorthodox theologies. One visitor reported his interview with a family whose three daughters were in the midst of preparing for a ball. Recoiling in horror, the enthusiastic visitor warned the mother of the perils of dancing and persuaded the young ladies not to go. Another lady persuaded a woman she visited to prevail on her husband to dispose of his saloon. A third spent many anxious months in converting a Swedenborgian to more orthodox beliefs.[46]

At first, the families visited seem to have been almost exclusively middle and lower-middle class. Some visitors indeed showed a definite hesitancy in approaching the homes of the well-to-do. This demonstrates, I think, the class assumptions and make-up of the Society's membership--and that of a number of contemporary evangelical

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[46] Advocate of Moral Reform, IV (January 15, 1838), 14-15; Advocate of Moral Reform, IV (February 15, 1838), 29-30; and Advocate of Moral Reform, IV (March 1, 1838), 37.

societies. The leadership as well as the rank and file did not come from the oldest, wealthiest and most prestigious families; the societies represented the newly respectable, the recently prosperous--in many cases families whose roots were not in the city but in New England or Western New York. (Though conclusive evidence is of course lacking, it seems likely that their participation in the Society's activities was an assertion of the legitimacy of their own roles through a defensive attack on the implied godlessness of established families who did not live as Christians should.) By the late 1830's when the enthusiasm of the revivals had begun to wane, many of the Reform Society's lady tract distributors began to fear cold receptions at New York's most elegant homes. As one visitor wrote:

> Felt some reluctance at entering a large and elegant house. I knew that my errand, though a noble one, would receive only the contempt of the rich and the great. . . . The ladies were out, and had the opportunity for conversation with the servant. . . . Her mind was extremely tender. She took the paper with eagerness, and asked immediately for tracts . . . .

"The consciences of the rich," the visitor reflected, "seem buried in the abundance of their riches."[47] A few such experiences tended to confirm the ladies' natural tendency to visit the middling classes of society. Gradually, however, as their knowledge and experience broadened, they began to

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[47]See the comments of two Society visitors in Advocate of Moral Reform, IV (March 1, 1838), 37.

visit even the poor and soon to think of themselves as missionaries specifically to the city's poor.[48]

During the late 1830's their work among the poor grew steadily. Visitors began to report canvassing tenement houses or helping families "respectable but poor."[49] On November 9, 1840, the executive committee could specifically define missionary work among the poor as the chief function of the visiting committees. "The duties," they explained, "of those employed as visiting committees shall be to devote their time to faithful missionary labor in the destitute portions of our city."[50]

Important as the ladies' own efforts were in reaching the poor and thus reshaping the Society's policies, external events conspired to almost force upon them the assumption of responsibility for feeding and clothing the needy. In July of 1837 (but a few months after the disintegration of the ladies' House of Refuge) a number of eastern banks failed, precipitating the Panic of 1837, a depression which lasted until the mid-1840's. The Society, already in contact with the poor, through its employment agency and

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[48]The visitors had hesitated at first at this step. One member of the visiting committee remarked early in 1838 that she did not usually visit the very poor. "We knew not what treatment we were to expect in these wretched houses . . . ." Finally, however, she visited some twenty slum families. Advocate of Moral Reform, IV (February 15, 1838), 30.

[49]Ibid.

[50]Advocate of Moral Reform, VI (November 9, 1840), 44.

visiting committee, acted to meet the emergency. The New York Female Moral Reform Society first began to distribute charity to the poor the February that followed the crash. From that date, the executive committee minutes indicate a rapid expansion of this work.[51] By the year's end, indeed, the Society's members were fast becoming expert observers of New York slum conditions. The visiting committee repeatedly reported finding great destitution, in some cases approaching starvation, among the laboring classes. The funds of New York's ward relief committees had, the visitors found, become completely inadequate. Hundreds were turned away each day as provisions dwindled at local soup kitchens. The visiting committee saw little choice but to attempt insofar as they could to supplement the efforts of the established ward relief committees.[52]

Though its scale increased, this work remained inherently random and--in a sense--inadvertent. Its object was still the conversion of the individual soul. The visiting committee sought out tenement families to convert them, to give them free tracts and copies of the Advocate, to pray with them and urge them to attend church. If such families

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[51]From 1838 on, the executive committee received regular reports from the visiting committee on living conditions among the poor. A.F.G.S., "Minute Book No. 2, 1839-1840," passim. Archives.

[52]See, for example, Advocate of Moral Reform, IV (March 15, 1838), 46, Advocate of Moral Reform, IV (January 1, 1838), 7, Advocate of Moral Reform, IV (February 15, 1838), 29-30, and Advocate of Moral Reform, IV (March 1, 1838), 37.

happened to be destitute, without food or clothing, if there were sick children or a dying grandparent--then the ladies of the Moral Reform Society were quick to give what help they could: quilts, sheets, food, medicines.[53] And, of course, the ladies of the visiting committee were exposed to the problems of only a minority among the poor, those who seemed "virtuous" and receptive to the word of God. The moralism which informed their view of the world also helped determine the objects of their charity. A Society visitor, for example, walking down Ann Street, in the heart of one of the city's worst slums, was shocked by the extreme poverty of the inhabitants. "But alas!" she reported, "few were found deserving of relief, nearly all were reduced to their present suffering by a course of vice."[54] As was the case with many contemporary religious charities, the Society had true access only to families whose attitudes agreed in most cases with their own. With Catholics, many immigrants, the criminal and atheistic, the Society had little if any contact. These poor were simply outside the ladies' experience, and the contacts which did occur brought only misunderstanding and hostility.[55]

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[53]N.Y.F.M.R.S., "Executive Committee Minutes, February 7, 1838, February 15, 1838, March 1, 1838, October 24, 1838, February 11, 1841."

[54]Advocate of Moral Reform, IV (March 1, 1838), 37.

[55]A.F.G.S., "Executive Committee Minutes, March 6, 1844, February 25, 1846, April 1, 1846, June 3, 1846," pp. 62-63, 72-73, 94-95.

Two events broadened and enlarged the ladies' involvement with the urban poor. The first occurred in 1840 when the executive committee selected Samuel B. Halliday as the Society's bethel missionary. The second, as we have to an extent already indicated, was the cumulative effect of the Society's increasing involvement in outdoor relief; with municipal and private philanthropy inadequate, irresistible pressure was placed upon any organization which promised to help those in need.

In September of 1840, the Moral Reform Society (its name recently changed to the American Female Guardian Society) decided to intensify its efforts to convert the city's sailors by employing a minister to work specifically among them--in the idiom of the day, a bethel missionary.[56] Undoubtedly, the executive committee sought merely to continue their attempts to reform morals and to fight prostitution. Samuel B. Halliday, the missionary chosen for the position, brought to it not only morality and evangelical zeal, however, but the experience of one who had labored for over a decade among the city's poor. He was, indeed, a prototype of the institutional clergyman, his career shaped and defined in a series of such extra-parochial positions. Drawn into philanthropic work by his own intense conversion, experienced during the revival of 1829, Halliday had begun his labors by directing a

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[56]A.F.G.S., "Executive Committee Minutes, September 10, 1840," pp. 37-38.

Sunday school for New York's Negro children. In 1833, he was hired as a missionary by the New York City Tract Society. Halliday worked for the Tract Society until 1840, organizing prayer meetings and distributing tracts. Perhaps more importantly, he visited among the poor, supervised the distribution of outdoor relief and inevitably deepened his own knowledge of slum conditions; he knew how difficult it was to remain either healthy or moral on the wages paid washerwomen, laborers, and seamstresses. By the end of the thirties, Halliday had clearly formulated his ideas of the relationship between adverse environmental conditions and the existence of crime, intemperance, sickness--and prostitution.[57]

Halliday made his views known immediately. Within three months of hiring their new bethel missionary, the executive committee of the American Female Guardian Society had petitioned the state legislature to change the laws regulating seamen's wages and to pass new legislation calling for safety provisions on sailing vessels.[58] Within six months, the Society opened a clothing store "designed to furnish employment for the deserving and destitute,"

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[57]See, for example, Halliday's reports in the N.Y.C.T.S.'s Annual Report, 1834-1839. See, as well, biographical material in Halliday's own books: Halliday, Winning Souls; Lost and Found, or Life among the Poor (New York, 1859). Halliday later became extremely active in the American public health movement, infra, Chaps. VII and X.

[58]A.F.G.S., "Executive Committee Minutes, November 25, 1840," pp. 47-48.

and to provide low-cost provisions for seamen's families.[59] Halliday followed the sailors home and reported graphically the destitution he so frequently found.[60] The "Mariner's Family Industrial Association" was a direct product of these revelations.[61] For years after Halliday's resignation in 1843, Female Guardian Society missionaries continued visiting and welfare work among sailors' families.[62]

The Panic of 1837 and the Society's first ventures into philanthropy became the basis for larger and more systematic efforts. Once the activities of the Society became "visible," New Yorkers placed an increasing burden of need upon its resources. Policemen, for example, directed stray women and children to the Society's rooms for help. The Mayor on one occasion requested the managers to take charge of a young girl who had tried to drown herself. Destitute women brought their cold and hungry children to the employment bureau, begging the ladies on duty to find good homes for them. Visiting committee members frequently collared homeless street-sweeps and newsboys, without parents,

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[59]A.F.G.S., "Executive Committee Minutes, February 3, 1841," p. 53.

[60]A.F.G.S., "Executive Committee Minutes, July 6, 1842," p. 151.

[61]A.F.G.S., Our Golden Jubilee. A Retrospect of the American Female Guardian Society and Home for the Friendless from 1834 to 1884 (New York: American Female Guardian Society, 1884), p. 21.

[62]A.F.G.S., "Executive Committee Minutes, July 2, 1845 and July 1, 1846," pp. 92-93, 164.

without proper clothing, without even a roof to shelter them at night. Beginning in the late thirties, many of the ladies active in the Society's work began to take homeless girls and young children into their own families. (The executive committee also voted funds to cover the cost of boarding other vagrant children and the infants of working mothers.)[63] In 1841, when asked to suggest a topic for the principal speaker at the Society's sixth anniversary, the executive committee underlined their consciousness of the Society's new role by suggesting a discourse, not on the Seventh Commandment, but on "the condition of the poor in our city, the Fatherless and the orphan, the general field of missionary labor in the midst of us."[64]

Though the ladies remained dedicated supporters of the moral reform crusade, the American Female Guardian Society had changed perceptibly in the years since 1834. Gone was the joyous optimism which anticipated the momentary coming of Christ's Second Kingdom. The ladies no longer asserted--or, presumably, felt--that their organization could drive prostitution from the land and purify American morals. They had assumed the more limited goal of helping, insofar as they could, to care for the city's

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[63]A.F.G.S., "Executive Committee Minutes, July 6, 1841, December 1, 1841, December 8, 1841, June 19, 1844," pp. 96, 115, 118; Advocate of Moral Reform, IV (March 15, 1838), 46.

[64]A.F.G.S., "Executive Committee Minutes, April 22, 1841," pp. 62-63.

deserving poor. But these changes were gradual, and the Society's new pragmatic aims seemed to its members in the 1840's no less significant than the older, more millennial goals had in the mid-1830's. The narrowing and the increasing pragmatism of the new program reflected, as we have indicated, not only a change in the generation's religious temper, but as well asgrowth in the numbers and misery of the poor--and an increasing awareness among respectable New Yorkers of the existence of urban poverty and the necessity of ameliorating such conditions. And, as we have emphasized, one source of such knowledge lay in the activities of such evangelistic societies as the New York Female Moral Reform Society.

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This pattern of development closely resembled that of New York's other city missions. But in one aspect the Society was unique. That was its founders' conscious--indeed at times aggressive--assertion of the rights and superior virtues of the female sex.

The urge to go about as self-proclaimed and zealous missionaries of the Lord affected many pious church-going women during the 1830's. But most devoted their energies to such socially acceptable causes as Sunday schools, Bible and tract distribution, foreign missions, or the temperance crusade. The moral reform movement, widely criticized as indelicate if not improper, required from its members a

different, perhaps deeper, commitment. Undoubtedly the individuals joining the Society did so for deeply personal reasons. One assumes their "extreme" personalities were, to some degree at least, atypical; yet it seems clear that they expressed more general, if less consciously felt, sentiments. In a real sense, the moral reform crusade can be seen as part of a growing self-awareness among middle-class American women, as part of an ordinarily unexpressed desire for an expansion of their role.

The moral reform movement provided a number of outlets for the middle-class woman, released from the labors of the farm by residence in town or city and freed of much household drudgery by servants. The Society broke down the barriers which restricted her to the home. It provided her with a journal written and managed by women, devoted to discussions of immediate interest to the pious American woman. It offered her, through her moral influence in the home and community, a significant part in bringing the millennium. And, by attributing prostitution to the lechery of men, it gave a significant number of women a socially acceptable avenue for expressing hostility to men. But far more than this, the Society, by its war against the double standard, offered the American woman a way in which, while remaining within the security of the family unit, she could control the behavior of men.

Certainly the American Female Moral Reform Society reflected this unspoken feminism in its own institutional

history. Had not its lady founders established their Society against the expressed wishes of the city's religious leaders, the religious press, and most of New York's respectable men? Theirs was an organization of women; even its officers were all female. And, increasingly, so were its agents and employees. As early as February, 1835, for instance, the executive committee hired a Mrs. Fenton as their agent to solicit subscriptions to the Advocate.[65] That summer they hired another woman to travel through New England and New York State organizing auxiliaries and giving speeches to women on moral reform.[66] In October, 1836, the executive officers appointed two women as editors of their journal--undoubtedly among the first of their sex in this country to hold such positions.[67] And the executive committee continued what had by now become a conscious policy of hiring women in preference to men. By the end of the thirties, two women were employed visiting in the city, and in 1841 the committee decided to replace their male financial agent with a woman bookkeeper. By 1843 women even set the type and did the folding for the Society's journal.[68]

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[65]N.Y.F.M.R.S., "Executive Committee Minutes, February 20, 1835," p. 32.

[66]N.Y.F.M.R.S., "Executive Committee Minutes, October 4, 1836," p. 59.

[67]N.Y.F.M.R.S., "Executive Committee Minutes, October 5, 1836," p. 63; N.Y.F.M.R.S., Fifth Annual Report, p. 5.

[68]Northrup, Record, pp. 21-25. For details of replacing male employees with women and the bitterness of the male reaction, see A.F.G.S., "Executive Committee Minutes," passim,

All these jobs, the ladies proudly, indeed aggressively stressed, were appropriate tasks for women.[69]

Perhaps most importantly, the American Female Moral Reform Society gave its members a sense of female solidarity, a sense of worthiness and autonomy outside woman's traditionally confining role. Its members, their officers frequently told them, formed a united phalanx of some 20,000 women.[70] All were daily engaged in a battle to protect their own sex and purify the world by enforcing female moral standards upon the male community. Indeed the Society in its Fourth Annual Report listed as one of its

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for early 1843. Nevertheless, even these aggressively feminist women did not feel that women could with propriety chair public meetings, even those of their own Society. In 1838, for instance, when the ladies discovered that men expected to attend their annual meeting, they felt that they had to ask other men to chair the meeting and read the reports. Northrup, Record, p. 22.

[69]A.F.G.S., Eleventh Annual Report for the Year 1845 (New York, 1845), pp. 5-6.

[70]The executive committee minutes and the Advocate are dotted with statements of an aggressively militant type. For example, the statement made at the executive committee meeting in 1836: "Thousands are looking to us . . . they reasonably expect to witness our united onward movements till the conflict shall end in Victory." Or a comment in the Fourth Annual Report: "The banner of Female Purity is set up," and American women were prepared to "march out to meet the giant sin." In 1837, the American Seventh Commandment Society, a male group, suggested at the time of its organization that the ladies could now properly retire from the field. This they testily refused to do. "We regard ourselves," they replied, "as acting on the behalf and in the name of a large portion of our sex to whom we have virtually pledged ourselves and as occupying ground which none but women could so appropriately or efficiently fill." N.Y.F.M.R.S., "Executive Committee Minutes, October 24, 1836, June 28, 1837," pp. 64-65, 88; N.Y.F.M.R.S., The Guardian, p. 3.

principal accomplishments "THE UNION OF SENTIMENT AND EFFORT AMONG SO MANY THOUSANDS OF VIRTUOUS FEMALES FROM MAINE TO ALABAMA." "The mothers and daughters of our land are coming up to the contest, and their motto is, 'Extermination or everlasting battle.' . . . Is it nothing gained then, if more than twenty thousand warm hearts are beating in unison on this subject, and pledged to each other and to God, for the defence of the great principles of virtue?"[71]

The key to this esprit de corps--it would seem from the tone and rhetoric which characterized almost every issue of the Advocate--was a deep-seated hostility towards men, towards their violation of the Seventh Commandment, but, as well, towards their superior position in the home and in society generally. Titles such as "Licentious Males More to be Despised than Licentious Females" were typical.[72] Equally common were the letters from rural subscribers castigating particular men for callously seducing an innocent girl, causing her ruin, yet retaining favor in the most polite society. Most letters protested particular incidents, but a significant number voiced a bitterness and hostility towards men clearly disproportionate to the particular circumstances involved. The Society's journal provided an avenue for women to express such otherwise publicly unvoiced feelings. Remarking on the double standard and men's

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[71]N.Y.F.M.R.S., The Guardian, p. 8.

[72]Advocate of Moral Reform, I (November, 1835), 84.

attitude towards the seduced woman, one not atypical rural subscriber complained to the Society in 1834,

> Honorable men; they would not plunder; a mean action they despise; an imputation on their honour might cost a man his life's blood. And yet they are so passingly mean, so utterly contemptible, as basely and treacherously to contrive . . . the destruction of happiness, peace, morality, and all that is endearing in social life; they plunge into degradation, misery, and ruin, those whom they profess to love. O let them not be trusted. Their 'tender mercies are cruel.'[73]

A similar tone, though more cautiously expressed, characterized many of the Society's official pronouncements. "It makes us indignant," the editors of the Advocate wrote in 1835, "that our sex should any longer be imposed upon by men, who pass as gentlemen and yet are guilty of loathsome and disgusting conduct. It is a justice which we owe to each other, to expose their names . . . ."[74] An even sharper note of hostility was sounded in a resolution unanimously adopted at one of the Society's quarterly meetings. "Let the condemnation of the guilty of our sex remain entire; but let not the most guilty of the two--the deliberate destroyer of female innocence--be afforded even an 'apron of fig leaves,' to conceal the blackness of his crimes."[75] Editorials constantly urged women to refuse

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[73]Letter, McDowall's Journal, II (April, 1834), 26-27. For similar letters, see Advocate of Moral Reform, I (January-February, 1835), 7, (April, 1835), 22, (December, 1835), 91.

[74]Advocate of Moral Reform, I (April, 1835), 20.

[75]Advocate of Moral Reform, IV (January 15, 1838), 14.

men of questionable reputation admittance to their homes, to reject proposals of marriage from such men, and in short to drive them out of respectable society.[76]

This hostility towards men, so marked in the Moral Reform Society's rhetoric, yet limited by the accepted form of explicit moral outrage, occasionally manifested itself in even more basic and ultimately revealing criticism. An editorial in the Advocate in 1838, for instance, expressed a deeply felt resentment against the power asserted by many husbands over their wives and children. "A portion of the inhabitants of this favored land," the Society admonished,

> are groaning under a despotism, which seems to be modeled precisely after that of the Autocrat of Russia. . . . We allude to the tyranny exercised in the HOME department, where lordly man, 'clothed with a little brief authority,' rules his trembling subjects with a rod of iron, conscious of entire impunity, and exalting in his fancied superiority.

The Society continued, perhaps even more bitterly, "Instead of regarding his wife as a help-mate for him, an equal sharer in his joys and sorrows, he looks upon her as a useful article of furniture, which is valuable only for the benefit derived from it, but which may be thrown aside at pleasure."[77] Such behavior, the editorial carefully emphasized, not only was common, experienced by many of the

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[76]Advocate of Moral Reform, I (January-February, 1835), passim, (September, 1835), 70, II (February 8, 1836), 20, IV (January 1, 1838), 6.

[77]Advocate of Moral Reform, IV (February 15, 1838), 28.

Society's own members--even by the wives of "Christians" and of ministers--but was accepted by society and even justified by men; was it not sanctioned by the Bible?

At about the same time, the editors of the Advocate went so far as to print a lengthy attack upon "masculine" translations and interpretations of the Bible, and especially of Paul's epistles. These appeared in a letter written by Sarah Grimké, noted feminist and abolitionist. Calling upon American women to read and interpret the Bible for themselves, she asserted that God had created woman the absolute equal of man. But throughout history, man, being stronger, had usurped the natural rights of women. He had subjected wives and daughters to his physical control and had evolved religious and scientific rationalizations to justify this domination. "Men have endeavored to entice, or to drive women from almost every sphere of moral action." Miss Grimké charged,

> 'Go home and spin' is the . . . advice of the domestic tyrant. . . . The first duty, I believe, which devolves on our sex now is to think for themselves. . . . Until we take our stand side by side with our brother; until we read all the precepts of the Bible as addressed to woman as well as to man, and lose . . . the consciousness of sex, we shall never fulfil the end of our existence.[78]

Yet such overt criticism of woman's traditional role, such explicit hostility towards men was atypical (containing

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[78] Advocate of Moral Reform, IV (January 1, 1838), 3-5. For a recent study of the Grimké sisters, see Gerda Lerner, "Abolitionists from South Carolina: a Life of Sarah and Angelina Grimké" (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Columbia University, 1966).

as it did an attack upon the Protestant ministry and orthodox interpretations of the Bible). This went far beyond the consensus of the Advocate's rural subscribers. The following issue contained several letters sharply critical of Miss Grimké and of the managers, for printing her editorial.[79] And indeed the Advocate never again published the work of an overt feminist. Spokesmen for the Society had indeed always been careful to disown explicit attacks on traditional family structure and orthodox Christianity. Indeed their tone in defending tradition was not infrequently bitter and aggressive as, for example, when one of the Society's missionaries reported meeting "a 'Fanny Wright,' in a woman from Philadelphia. . . . Miserable wretch! She talked like a fool about abrogating the marriage covenant. Her talk was so abominable that she was sent from our presence . . . ."[80]

The American Female Guardian Society's primary motive and object was the advancement of evangelical Protestantism, and in particular of the Millennium. Only within such a context did they express their feminist sympathies. Overt woman's rights advocates, on the other hand, not infrequently espoused questionable theological doctrines, or else were outrightly atheistic. Anti-clericalism had its part in the woman's rights movement as did radical criticism of such social institutions as the family, divorce, and male

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[79] Advocate of Moral Reform, IV (April 1, 1838), 55, and (July 16, 1838), 108.

[80] Advocate of Moral Reform, I (March, 1835), 12.

suffrage. The feminist sentiments expressed by the New York managers and their rural auxiliaries were far more covert--and thus presumably characteristic of a far broader grouping in American society. Rather than being rallying cries for revolutionary programs in woman's rights, these statements were the expression, often barely conscious, of a newly sharpened resentment of women's traditional social and family roles--a resentment we can perhaps associate with the social and economic changes taking place in America during "The Age of Jackson."

CHAPTER VI

Both the New York City Tract Society and the American Female Guardian Society were essentially evangelical in motivation and world-view. Their involvement with New York's slum dwellers originated, as we have seen, not in the hope of elevating the temporal condition of the poor--but as an incidental skirmish in a more general and uncompromising onslaught against sin.

The millennial pietism which led these mission supporters to discover the poverty in their city shaped as well their attitudes toward the misery they encountered. These evangelical reformers did not view urban poverty as simply an economic problem; it was in essence a moral evil. The human misery of New York's tenements seemed obviously a forcing-ground for crime, vice, and irreligion. Such conditions could not be tolerated; neither evangelically committed group could completely accept Christ's admonition that the poor you should have always with you.

Not all of New York's religious philanthropists felt this millennial urgency. During the same years that the missionaries of the Tract and Female Guardian Societies began their struggle against urban sin, New York Episcopalians also began to work in Manhattan's slums. But their

preconceptions and motivations were quite different; these benevolent Churchmen sought answers to the same problems as their evangelical contemporaries but from within their distinctly catholic traditions. The Episcopal church accepted the inevitability of poverty--and had developed a number of traditional means for dealing with this problem within parish bounds; this habit of parochial responsibility was as old as the medieval church.

By the 1820's and 1830's, zealous American Episcopalians had, in addition, begun to adopt some of the new methods developed by their evangelical contemporaries; like them, they hoped to both save the unchurched and to increase church membership. Indeed, these pious Churchmen hoped that such mission endeavors might bring new vitality to an Episcopal church weakened by both the American Revolution and the Second Great Awakening. Certainly they could not ignore the pietistic enthusiasm which so moved their fellow Americans.[1]

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[1]Relations between High and Low Church Episcopalians and between High Churchmen and the evangelical denominations suggest a relation between evangelical and Church missionary organizations more involved than simple emulation and exchange of ideas. Many of the Episcopal missionary and philanthropic societies (for example, the New York Protestant Episcopal Sunday School Union, The Bible and Common Prayer Book Society, the Protestant Episcopal Tract Society, even the New York Protestant Episcopal City Mission Society) seem to have been founded by High Churchmen in competition with the evangelical organizations. Indeed, all antebellum Episcopal philanthropic and missionary societies were founded and supported by "High Church" Bishops Hobart and Onderdonk. Leading Low Churchmen such as Stephen Tyng and James Milnor associated themselves not with Church organizations but with their evangelical counterparts. Cf. James Grant Wilson, ed.,

Thus the founding in 1831 of the New York Protestant Episcopal City Mission Society. Its first act was to establish a mission station in one of New York's worst slums and to hire a missionary to "visit among the poor" urging them to attend Episcopal services. By the early 1840's, the Society supported three mission churches, a score of Sunday schools, several charity day schools, free religious libraries--and, as well, a special "missionary-at-large" whose task it was to reach the truly destitute slum dweller through prayer and the distribution of charity. The Episcopal City Mission Society was one of New York's first conscious attempts to ameliorate the condition of the city's depressed classes.

This Episcopal effort to aid New York's poor differed in theoretical preconceptions, in tradition, in specific policies from its more evangelical sister organizations. Yet in many ways the Society's early history closely resembled theirs. As the shared enthusiasm of the 1830's cooled, however, institutional divergences became increasingly marked. The internal history of the Protestant

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The Centennial History of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the Diocese of New York 1785-1885 (New York, 1886), pp. 373-374, 389-395; Arthur Lowndes, A Century of Achievement, The History of the New York Bible and Common Prayer Book Society for One Hundred Years (New York, /1909/); John S. Stone, A Memoir of the Life of James Milnor, DD, Late Rector of St. George's Church, New York (New York, 1849); John Pintard, Letters, I, 39, 44-45, 90, 192, II, 134-135, III, 5, 27-28, 80, 175, 177, 261, IV, 55; Henry Anstice, A History of St. George's Church in the City of New York, 1752- 1811- 1911 (New York, 1911), pp. 89-90.

Episcopal City Mission Society demonstrates clearly these parallels--and as well the sources and paths of divergence. It provides, finally, another perspective from which to evaluate the social thought and preconceptions of respectable and articulate Protestants in Jacksonian America.

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On a June evening in 1831, at a joint anniversary meeting of Christ Church's Male and Female Missionary Associations, Benjamin Onderdonk, newly elected Bishop of the New York diocese, rose and urged the formation of a new benevolent society--an Episcopal city mission.

Episcopalians must, he argued, expand their traditional missionary aims. For years, Christians had been concerned with the need for sending missionaries to Asia and Africa and aiding struggling new parishes in their own Western lands. Yet the poor on Manhattan Island had received at best desultory attention; New York was a great and neglected mission field. Onderdonk proposed that the churches of the diocese join in supporting a new society "to preach the Gospel to those without it in New York City itself." The meeting adopted resolutions calling for the organization of such a mission effort and selected a committee to draft a circular to be sent to the city's clergy, inviting them and their

parishioners to attend a meeting at which this benevolent society would be organized.[2]

Well-to-do New Yorkers traditionally left the city during the hot and unhealthy summer months; nothing was done until September. Then, however, the organizational meetings were quickly held; support was enthusiastic, and New York's Protestant Episcopal City Mission Society began operations early in October of 1831.[3]

The Society's constitution divided power between the Bishop, the clergy, and the laity. All would have to co-operate if the new society were to prove successful. The officers of the Mission Society consisted of the bishop of the diocese as president ex officio, six vice-presidents (three lay and three clerical), and a secretary and treasurer, both laymen. The bishop's role was, potentially, far more than an honorary one; he not only served as president, but was given ultimate choice in the selection of

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[2]New York Protestant Episcopal City Mission Society (hereinafter referred to as P.E.C.M.S.), "Minutes leading to the formation of the New York Protestant Episcopal City Mission Society," manuscript ledger, New York Protestant Episcopal City Mission Society, 35 Bleecker Street, New York City (all manuscripts cited, unless otherwise noted, are deposited with the Society); P.E.C.M.S., "First Annual Report of the Protestant Episcopal City Mission Society of New York, presented January, 1832," printed in The Churchman, I (February 4, 1832), 182.

[3]P.E.C.M.S., "Minutes, Public Meeting, Christ Church, September 15, 1831"; Churchman, I (September 24, 1831), 107. For reports of other meetings, see Churchman, I (October 1, 1831), 111, (October 8, 1831), 115.

city missionaries.[4] The Board of Managers consisted of these officers, joined by the city's Episcopal ministers and forty elected lay members--elected, that is, by the several church vestries. The Society would thus enlist the support of both clergy and laymen, while alienating no established church.[5]

On October 1st, the Society's constitution was formally adopted; by the 29th a Board of Managers had been chosen, and standing committees appointed.[6] On November 1, the Board of Managers selected their first city missionary, Benjamin C. Cutler, formerly rector of an Episcopal Church in Quincy, Massachusetts.[7] On November 3, the Board purchased the old Presbyterian Church

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[4]Bishop Onderdonk was chairman of the committee charged with writing a constitution and acted as chairman of almost every organizational meeting. The minutes for this period as well as the editorials in Bishop Onderdonk's paper, The Churchman, indicate that the P.E.C.M.S. was undoubtedly the Bishop's creation. See Churchman, I (September 24, 1831), 107, (October 8, 1831), 115, II (August 13, 1832), 325.

[5]P.E.C.M.S., Constitution and Bylaws (New York, May, 1834).

[6]For names of the officers and members of the P.E.C.M.S., see "List of Officers and Lay Members, 1831-1864," manuscript copy, P.E.C.M.S.

[7]For biographical sketches of Cutler, see Samuel M. Dorrance, "Benjamin Clarke Cutler," Historical Magazine of the Protestant Episcopal Church, I (September, 1932), 153-164; Horatio Gray, Memoirs of the Reverend Benjamin C. Cutler, D.D. (New York, 1865). Cutler, after his early connection with the P.E.C.M.S., became a leading Low Church spokesman (this despite the P.E.C.M.S.'s High Church origins). See his published sermons, B. C. Cutler, Parochial Sermons Preached in St. Anne's Church, Brooklyn, New York (Philadelphia, 1857).

on Vandewater Street; it was to be their first church and mission station.[8]

The tradition of American Episcopalians caring for the destitute and outcast was almost as old as English colonization in the Western Hemisphere and began with the work of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts. The Society assumed responsibility for the religious instruction, general education, even the physical needs of the Negro slave, of the American Indian, and--along the eastern seaboard--of the urban poor. Individual parishes aided this London-based organization in its work. In the Episcopalian South, the church vestry supervised the distribution of county charity. In New York City, Trinity--in colonial times the city's only Episcopal Church--organized a charity day school for the children of New York's day laborers and artisans. The pupils were provided not only with instruction, but with food, clothing, even money when their families appeared sufficiently needy and deserving.[9]

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[8] Churchman, I (October 1, 1831), 111, (October 29, 1831), 127, and (November 12, 1831), 139; P.E.C.M.S., "Minutes . . . October 13, 1831, November 1, 1831, November 3, 1831, and November 14, 1831."

[9] Frank J. Klingberg, Anglican Humanitarianism in Colonial New York (Philadelphia, 1940), especially Chaps. III and IV; Carl Bridenbaugh, Mitre and Sceptre, Transatlantic Faiths, Ideas, Personalities, and Politics, 1689-1775 (New York, 1962); Wilson, Centennial History, pp. 370-371; John P. Peters, The Annals of St. Michaels Protestant Episcopal Church, New York, Compiled on order of the Vestry (New York, 1907).

Such philanthropic work continued, indeed increased, during the early decades of the nineteenth century. By 1821, for example, New York Episcopalians had helped found a Negro Episcopal congregation and two free Episcopal churches among the poor farmers and squatters of northern Manhattan. Episcopal ministers visited poor neighborhoods, holding Sunday services in areas unable to support a church. Church women organized charity sewing societies, making clothing and bedding for the poor of their parishes, distributing the funds raised by annual fairs and bazaars.[10]

By far the most important and intense contact that New York's respectable Episcopalian church members had with their poorer neighbors came through the parish Sunday school. As originally conceived--both in England and the United States--the Sunday school was a charity school, an attempt to bring religion, morals, and a modicum of secular education to the children of the poor. The children of church members--and this applied to evangelical as well as Episcopal churches--did not attend Sunday school; they received their religious education at home and from sermons they attended each Sabbath. Sunday school classes were--accordingly--held in most cases away from the Church building itself, in lofts or rooms rented in poorer neighborhoods.[11]

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[10]Pintard, Letters, IV, 82-83; Peters, St. Michaels, pp. 41, 44, 48-49, 69, 238-240; William Wilson Manross, "The Episcopal Church and Reform," Historical Magazine of the Protestant Episcopal Church, XII (1943), 339-386.

[11]Manross, The Episcopal Church in the United States, 1800-1840 (New York, 1938), pp. 200-201; Anstice, St. George's,

By 1833, New York Episcopalians supported twenty-four Sunday schools, with an enrollment of 6,161 pupils.[12] The Sunday school teachers, volunteers from among the regular church members, saw their activities as charitable, indeed missionary, labors. In addition to teaching the elements of reading and writing, they visited the homes of their "sabbath scholars"--preaching to and praying with adults and children alike.[13] Such informal, yet long-continued, measures could not but familiarize these pious teachers and visitors with the temporal needs of their slum-dwelling fellow New Yorkers. The judicious distribution of temporal charity soon became an important and consciously acknowledged part of the Sunday school movement.[14]

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pp. 87-91. St. George's, for example, organized four charity Sunday schools in slum neighborhoods. Other Episcopalians established Sunday schools at the Five Points, among the poor truck farmers of northern Manhattan, and the shanty towns of the west side. C. H. Brewer, Early Episcopal Sunday Schools (Milwaukee, 1933), p. 20; Churchman, III (June 29, 1833); Peters, St. Michaels, p. 40.

[12]Brewer, Sunday Schools, p. 24; William Stevens Perry, The History of the American Protestant Episcopal Church, 1587-1883 (2 vols.; Boston, 1885), II, 161.

[13]Indeed, one of the first publications of the Protestant Episcopal Sunday School Union was a series of 800 cards to aid teachers in instructing the illiterate to read. New York Protestant Episcopal Sunday School Society, First Annual Report of the Board of Managers, December 31, 1817 (New York, 1818); John Henry Hobart, The Beneficial Effects of Sunday Schools Considered: in an Address Delivered at the Anniversary Meeting of the Sunday Schools in Union with the New-York Protestant Episcopal Sunday School Society in St. Paul's Chapel on Wednesday, the 31st day of December, 1817 (New York, 1818).

[14]General Protestant Episcopal Sunday School Union, Fifth Annual Report (New York, 1831), p. 46; Hobart, Beneficial

A number of individual Episcopal churches, moreover, established comparatively elaborate charity day schools for the general education of the poor within parish boundaries and in adjacent neighborhoods.[15] The most active of these was not established by a particular church, however, but by the diocese itself; this was the Protestant Episcopal Public School, an outgrowth of the charity school established by Trinity during the colonial period.[16] By 1832, it enrolled 336 children. That same year the school's trustees tabulated--and fortunately for historians, published--a list of the occupations of their pupils' parents. Thirty of the three hundred were domestics, seventeen were seamstresses, twenty-four cartmen, and twelve laborers. Twenty-four were carpenters, six printers or hatters. Few of the parents could be classed as members, even marginally,

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Effects; F. G. Fish, St. Ann's Church from the Year 1784 to the Year 1845 (Brooklyn, 1845), pp. 48-49, 89; James Milnor, Address Delivered Before the Superintendents, Teachers and Pupils of the Sunday Schools Attached to St. George's Church in the City of New York on Sunday, November 9, 1817 (New York, 1817).

[15]Among the more active of these charity day schools were those supported by Grace Church and by St. Michael's. Peters, St. Michaels, pp. 59-66; William Rhinelander Stewart, Grace Church and Old New York (New York, 1924), pp. 106-107.

[16]Wilson, Centennial History, pp. 370-371; Benjamin T. Onderdonk, A Plea for Religious Charity Schools. A Sermon Preached in Trinity Church and St. Paul's and St. John's Chapels, New-York, for the Benefit of the New-York Episcopal Charity School (New York, 1825). For a recent study of Trinity School, see Edward Stewart Moffat, "Trinity School, New York City, 1709-1959" (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Columbia University, 1963).

of the petty bourgeoisie.[17] (Presumably the more affluent or pretentious among New York's employed classes sent their children to socially acceptable pay schools.) Yet it is logical to assume that the day school's student body was drawn from a higher income group than that of the usually illiterate children who attended only the Sunday schools--and who were attracted in many cases by the small charities of their volunteer teachers. Day school parents could dispense with their children's labor and were sufficiently motivated by middle-class values to think school attendance worthwhile.

By the 1820's and 1830's, then, at least some New York Episcopalians had become aware of the conditions in which New York's working people lived--and had already established institutions to extend both spiritual and material help.[18] The Episcopalian City Mission Society could, at its formation, call upon this background of pragmatic benevolence.

Yet its founders' attitudes toward poverty and the poor were no more clearly formulated than those of their evangelical contemporaries. Who, precisely, were the poor?

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[17] Churchman, I (January 7, 1832), 167, and II (November 24, 1832), 350.

[18] By 1832, for instance, the problems of urban poverty received frequent attention in the columns of the diocesan paper, The Churchman. See, for example, Churchman, I (January 14, 1832), 170, (February 4, 1832), 183, (February 18, 1832), 192; III (April 13, 1833), 430; and IV (February 7, 1835), 811.

Who among them deserved help? And how could they be genuinely aided?

New York had its very poor--the victims of either vice or misfortune--but it had as well a broad spectrum of clerks, artisans and shopkeepers--who, within the social usage of the time, were also considered to be among "the poor." They were potential church members; yet this potential was ordinarily unrealized, for they could rarely afford the high pew rentals and fashionable clothing demanded by the city's respectable churches. It was to this class--the upright yet not quite established economically--that the free church, with its day school, library, bazaars, and other social activities, would appeal. A viable free church might well be established with a base of such parishioners. Successful communication with this class demanded techniques entirely different from those appropriate for work with the city's most depressed classes. Programs capable of cementing the loyalty of one group might well alienate the other. Supporters of New York's Episcopal City Mission Society had first to decide which class among the poor they wished to help. Was their goal the establishment of a well-attended and decorous free church? Or the creation of a permanent mission to New York's outcast?

Knowledgeable Episcopal laymen and ministers were well aware of the heterogenous nature of New York's dependent classes. And this very awareness implied a policy choice for the new Society. Indeed, during the summer

months between Bishop Onderdonk's call for the founding of a city mission and its actual organization in the fall, New York Episcopalians raised the question; the pages of the Churchman for July and August are dotted with letters discussing the appropriate objects for the new Society's benevolence.

One writer, signing himself "Lazarus," represented the city's small tradesmen.[19] His emphasis was sharp and in a sense critical. Though the comfortable might not realize it, he warned, many of the city's Episcopalians were effectively barred from church attendance by excessive pew rentals. "Lazarus" found himself short of cash; the demands of his firm, coupled with the city's high cost of living, had made it impossible for him to afford the exorbitant pew rentals prevailing in New York's Episcopal churches. His problem was an unpleasant but not uncommon one; he had either to join a free church of another denomination or give up church attendance. Countless newcomers to the city, he explained, young clerks and business people from rural America or England, faced precisely this dilemma. Individuals of this type provided easily the most promising object of religious benevolence; there could be little doubt that efforts to bring them into the church would be rewarded with success. They need only be offered convenient and attractive free chapels. The projected city

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[19] Churchman, I (July 9, 1831), 63.

mission society, Lazarus hoped, would vigorously undertake this pious work.

Others, however, had different visions of the new Society's task.[20] It would, they hoped, reach beyond these church-going, newspaper-reading, small tradesmen and "act upon" the great mass of the city's unchurched and irreligious poor. (Like their evangelical counterparts, Episcopalian philanthropists regarded the new Catholic immigrants as unchurched.) The City Mission would, they hoped, bring God to the poor and outcast, many of whom might never have seen the inside of a church. One letter-writer urged that the Church renew itself in the image of St. Paul and preach to the poor, the illiterate, even to the criminal and prostitute. His opinion was endorsed by another correspondent to the Churchman who urged that all the city's Episcopal churches open their doors to the poor.

It was clear that the free church and mission station were real--and in a sense exclusive--alternatives; yet the problems inherent in embracing both modes of action were not so clearly understood. This problem, raised as we have seen in the months before the Episcopal Mission Society's founding, was to haunt the organization throughout its existence and played a significant part in the Society's temporary dissolution in 1847.

At the time of its founding in the fall of 1831, the Society's managers hoped that it could act as both free

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[20] Churchman, I (July 16, 1831), 66, and (August 13, 1831), 83.

church and mission to the outcast poor.[21] The problem was to find a neighborhood and a building in which that might be accomplished. The executive committee felt they had done so when they selected the old Presbyterian church on Vandewater Street, deserted when its congregation moved uptown; it seemed admirably suited to the fulfillment of the Society's broad goals.

Vandewater Street lay just six blocks west of the piers and warehouses of Front Street and the East River. It was located, as well, at the northern edge of the east side's crowded commercial district and adjacent to "the Swamp," the center of New York's leather-processing industry. The new church was thus convenient to a cross-section of New York's population; all but the wealthy worked in or passed through these streets--laboring men, clerks, and petty shopkeepers, skilled artisans, sailors, and transients. The houses that immediately surrounded the new mission church, on the other hand, sheltered a much narrower social stratum. Lying only a few blocks east of the Five Points, Vandewater and the adjacent

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[21]In a sermon on the second anniversary of the Church of the Holy Evangelists, the Rev. John F. Schroeder, a supporter of the P.E.C.M.S., emphasized the broad and eclectic aims of the Society. "We cannot discern, as yet, the actual dimensions of the object contemplated in our City-Mission, or catch a glimpse of its numerous Protean form. . . ." John Frederick Schroeder, "The Motive and Power of the Gospel in the Work of Missions: A Sermon in Behalf of the New-York Protestant Episcopal City-Mission preached . . . March 31, 1833," The Protestant Episcopal Pulpit, III (June, 1833), 93-112, 102-103.

streets were filled with immigrant lodging houses and the tenements of cartmen, day laborers, the chronically unemployed and the criminal.[22] It was an area which few established churches felt interested in serving. It was, however, precisely the sort of neighborhood which the managers and executive committee of the Society had sought out; commercial and residential, slum and lower middle class, it encompassed virtually all classes of the unchurched.

On November 19, 1831, Bishop Onderdonk consecrated this now unused Presbyterian church as the Church of the Holy Evangelists, the Protestant Episcopal City Mission Society's first mission station. Three weeks later, Reverend Benjamin Cutler assumed his duties as the new mission's pastor.[23]

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[22]Scoville, Old Merchants, pp. 252-253; Williams, New York, map opposite p. 92; Norcross, New York Swamp, pp. 65-68; Ernst, Immigrant Life, pp. 39-40, map, p. 43. Actual sketches and descriptions of Vandewater Street as it appeared during the 1830's and 1840's can be found in: William Perris, Maps of the City of New-York, Surveyed under the Direction of the Insurance Companies of Said City, Vol. I: Comprising the 1st, 2nd, 3rd, and 4th Ward (New York, 1852) (Perris contains "pictographs" of all buildings on each city block, telling the size and construction material); Samuel Morgan Alvord, Genealogy of the Descendants of Alexander Alvord (Webster, New York, 1908), pp. 278-289; anonymous photograph of Vandewater Street, Vandewater Street, Map and Print Collection, New York Historical Society, New York City; Valentine, Manual of the Corporation of the City of New York, 1864 (New York, 1864), sketch opposite p. 316.

[23]Churchman, I (November 12, 1831); Benjamin T. Onderdonk, A Sermon, on the Excellence, the Benefits and the Obligations of the Divine Law. Preached at the Consecration of the Mission-Church of the Holy Evangelists, in the City of New-York, on Saturday, Nov. 19, 1831 (New York, 1831).

The following months were active and encouraging ones for Cutler and the Society. The Church regularly held three Sunday and one weekday service. Each week Cutler met with the volunteer Sunday school teachers and with candidates for baptism and confirmation; he married, baptised and confirmed--provided, indeed, all the normal Episcopal pastoral services for an extensive area without churches or clergymen. After three months, he could report encouraging results. Cutler had attracted an average of four hundred persons to his Sunday services and secured forty communicants as continuing members of the Church of the Holy Evangelists.[24]

The most active components of this rapidly growing mission church were its Sunday and infant schools. The Sunday school and the visiting of its volunteer teachers, the Society's founders firmly believed, had always been the source of the Church's closest and earliest contacts with the poor. The Society's executive committee thus considered the establishment of a well-attended Sunday school as fundamental to their mission chapel's success. Even before purchasing the Vandewater Street Church, the executive committee had organized a school committee, begun to recruit Sunday school teachers, and had bought prayer books and Bibles for Sunday and infant day schools. No sooner had the Bishop consecrated the Holy Evangelists than it opened

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[24]P.E.C.M.S., First Quarterly Report of the Executive Committee, March 4, 1832 (New York, 1832), pp. 5-6; Churchman, I (December 10, 1831), 150.

its first Sunday school class on November 20, 1831.[25] Within a few weeks, one hundred children were in regular attendance. By the spring of 1832, the school committee could report a total of 275 children enrolled; the Board of Female Visitors conducted a daily infant school with an average attendance of seventy.[26]

The families reached through these Episcopal Sunday schools were among the poorest in the city. And, indeed, the managers took genuine pride in their ability to work with and help these destitute children, the offspring of the "depraved" as well as the "worthy." In May of 1832, for example, Bishop Onderdonk, as chairman of the Society's school committee, reported with real elation that "by far the largest number [of the students] are children of poor intemperate and decayed families."[27]

These Sabbath scholars had not migrated naturally or spontaneously to the classroom. Sunday school teachers, visitors, and the Society's missionaries had from the first sought out the district's poorest families and most

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[25]P.E.C.M.S., "Executive Committee Minutes, November 14, 1831."

[26]P.E.C.M.S., "First Annual Report, 1832," reprinted in Churchman, I (February 4, 1832), 182. Also see Churchman, I (January 21, 1832), 175; P.E.C.M.S., "First Report of School Committee," printed in Churchman, I (May 5, 1832), 234.

[27]Churchman, I (May 5, 1832), 234; P.E.C.M.S., First Quarterly Report of the Executive Committee, pp. 5-7; Letter to Editor from "B," Churchman, II (May 5, 1832), 234-235.

dilapidated tenements. Often they found that a lack of clothing, rather than interest, kept children from school and church; not uncommonly these little urchins lacked shoes, stockings, and other necessities. As early as December 3, 1831, the School Committee issued an appeal through the Churchman for contributions of food, clothing, and money for their Sabbath and day-nursery scholars.[28]

The seemingly inevitable pattern of city mission work was again being enacted; temporal relief assumed an ever-larger place in the Society's work. Within a month of their appeal, the school committee reported aiding eight families with substantial sums of money, and feeding and clothing a goodly number of their scholars. They soon established a formal Benevolent Society to raise money for this purpose. During their first winter of work, the teachers distributed small gifts of money as well as more traditional food, clothing, and fuel. Souls, it was apparent, could not be saved while bodies remained cold and hungry.[29]

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[28]Churchman, I (November 12, 1831), 139, (December 3, 1831), 146-147, II (May 5, 1832), 234; P.E.C.M.S., "First Quarterly Report of the Executive Committee," p. 8; P.E.C.M.S., "First Annual Report," p. 182.

[29]P.E.C.M.S., "First Annual Report," pp. 5-6; P.E.C.M.S., "Second Quarterly Report of the Executive Committee, June 1832," printed Churchman, II (June 16, 1832), 258-259; Benjamin Clarke Cutler, Sermon in Behalf of the New-York Protestant Episcopal City-Mission Society; preached in the Mission-Church of the Holy Evangelists, New-York, on Sunday Evening, Oct. 14, 1832 (New York, 1832).

The Society did not, of course, limit its attention to Sunday school children, but consistently sought out the adult as well as the juvenile slum-dwellers surrounding them. During its first year of existence, the Society continued to hope that the most abandoned among the city's poor would become their missionaries' "special parishioners." In his first three months as city missionary, for example, Benjamin Cutler reported having made 132 visits to sordid tenement apartments.[30]

The cholera epidemic which struck New York in the spring of 1832--only a half-year after the Society's founding--dramatically intensified these efforts.[31] The Mission Society's executive committee immediately expanded the amount of outdoor relief it distributed. Individual members visited the tenements surrounding the mission chapel giving clothes, bedding, and food to the poor, while the Society's managers initiated an ambitious program of work relief.[32]

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[30]P.E.C.M.S., First Quarterly Report of the Executive Committee, March, 1834 (New York, 1834), pp. 3-5; P.E.C.M.S., Third Annual Report, read January 9, 1834 (New York, 1834), p. 12. Benjamin Onderdonk publicly thanked New Yorkers for making the Society their almoner and stressed the need for increased charitable contributions, Churchman, II (May 19, 1832), 242.

[31]See especially Charles E. Rosenberg, Cholera Years, passim.

[32]Churchman, II (July 21, 1832), 279, (August 4, 1832), 287, (January 19, 1833), 383; P.E.C.M.S., "Minutes, First Quarterly Meeting, of the Executive Committee, March 31, 1833," printed Churchman, III (April 13, 1833), 430.

During the years that followed the epidemic, the Society's charitable activities steadily grew. Appeals for contributions by their city missionaries began to appear with increasing frequency in the pages of the Churchman. Although the Society was careful to emphasize its ultimate spiritual aims, it had come to accept and argue explicitly that temporal relief was often a necessary prerequisite to spiritual uplift. "Although our chief object is to save the soul," the Society argued in its Third Annual Report,

> yet it has been found that in many cases the Missionary cannot properly enter on the peculiar duties of his visit before he has fed the hungry, or clothed the naked, or nursed the sick, or provided fuel for the destitute:--before he has relieved some of the nameless wants of the sons and daughters of physical suffering.[33]

Thus when the Society held its first annual meeting in June of 1832, its executive committee could take pride in a variety of activities already undertaken, in a program more pragmatic than any of those as yet carried out by contemporary evangelical city missions. The Society had established a free church in a notoriously unpromising neighborhood. It had founded a flourishing Sunday school; its infant school had attracted an enrollment of ninety and volunteer teachers, through their Benevolent Committee, were actively visiting and aiding all the poor who lived near the mission chapel.[34]

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[33]P.E.C.M.S., "Minutes of the Second Quarterly Report of the Executive Committee, June 3, 1832."

[34]Benjamin Onderdonk, "Address to the Convention," Churchman, II (October 13, 1832), 325.

Thus, in the spring of 1832, the executive committee felt prepared to undertake a new and highly ambitious program, one which would greatly expand the Society's activities and contact with the city's poor. That March, the executive committee voted to divide the city into ten districts, each to contain approximately twenty thousand persons. The executive committee appointed a committee for each district whose charge it was to establish a Sunday school, a religious library, and to ascertain the possibility of launching a mission chapel. Each of these committees, the Society hoped, would create a new mission station to parallel the successful religious and charitable work already undertaken at Holy Evangelists. In this way the managers hoped they might bring the Episcopal faith to the city's poor and unchurched.[35]

During the next few years, the Society's members worked actively to implement this program. No group was more active than the local committee for "District E," a rectangle bounded by Grand and Houston Streets, the Bowery and East River. District E lay just northeast of the city's center and just south of the shipyards and slums of Corlear's Hook. A relatively new section, its population consisted of

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[35]P.E.C.M.S., "Executive Committee Minutes, November 8, 1832, November 23, 1832"; Lot Jones, A Discourse Delivered on the Twenty-Fifth Anniversary of the Church of the Epiphany, New York, January 10, 1858, by the Rector and First Pastor (New York, 1858). Lot Jones had been pastor of Epiphany from its inception in 1833.

laborers, artisans, and a sprinkling of petty shopkeepers. Its homes and tenements were small and crudely built. Devoid of churches, containing but one public school, it was hardly one of the city's better residential areas.[36] For these reasons, however, it was in the opinion of the City Mission Society a natural location for the establishment of a charity Sunday school--and possibly a mission chapel as well.

No sooner had the committee organized than they conducted a careful canvass of their district, familiarizing themselves with its population and its religious and educational needs. On December 26, 1832, they were able to open their first Sunday school and planned as well to establish a small chapel in a rented loft nearby.[37]

But the members of District Committee E were not the only New York Episcopalians interested in this Houston-Grand Street area as a mission field. Most prominent among a number of free-lance Episcopal missionaries was the Reverend John McVickar, a professor at Columbia College, and better known to historians as an influential writer on political economy. McVickar regularly spent his Sundays conducting religious services in the city's poorest neighborhoods.

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[36]For a detailed contemporary description of streets in the Allen, Stanton, Rivington and Orchard street area, see Perris, Maps, Vol. II: Comprising 7th, 10th and 13th Ward (New York, 1952). See, as well, an engraving depicting Stanton Street in Leslie's Weekly, III (February 28, 1857), 204.

[37]Churchman, II (December 29, 1832), 371.

In this way he had come to know the workingclass district southwest of Corlear's Hook. At the same time that the committee for District E was organizing its Sunday school, McVickar was preparing to open a mission chapel of his own.[38]

McVickar held his first mission services on January 6th, 1833. His congregation met in a poorly lit loft over a fire-engine room on Allen Street; it consisted of but a handful of adults and a few children. McVickar could provide them with only two ragged prayer books--and his own prayers.[39] During the following weeks, however, the mission expanded. McVickar was able to rent a larger room on the corner of Houston and Allen Streets and--with the help of two of his Columbia College students--begin a Sunday school.[40]

The Columbia political economist soon presented an account of his work to the Executive Committee of the Mission Society; he proposed that his chapel--he called it the Church of the Epiphany--be transferred to the Episcopal City Mission Society and that it serve as one of its mission stations. The Executive Committee quickly adopted his proposal.

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[38]John McVickar to Charles King, December 4, 1854, John McVickar File, Columbiana Collection, Columbia University, New York City; Jones, Discourse, pp. 6-8; P.E.C.M.S., Ninth Annual Report, 1840 (New York, 1840), pp. 14-15; for a recent scholarly biography of McVickar, see; John Brett Langstaff, The Enterprising Life: John McVickar 1787-1868 (New York, 1961). See also: W. A. McVickar, The Life of the Reverend John McVickar, S.T.D. (New York, 1872); Joseph Dorfman and R. C. Tugwell, "The Reverend John McVickar, Christian Teacher and Economist," Columbia University Quarterly, XXIII (December, 1931), 353-401.

[39]Jones, Discourse, p. 6.

[40]Churchman, II (January 12, 1833), 379.

The Church of the Epiphany, absorbing the tiny chapel and Sunday school already established for District E, became the Society's second mission church.[41]

The Mission Church of the Epiphany soon rewarded the faith of its founders. During its first year of existence, while still crowded into a tiny loft, its regular congregation increased from forty to four hundred and the number of communicants from ten to seventy. Their Sunday schools had attracted more than three hundred children--and, by the year's end, could boast of the services of some thirty volunteer teachers.[42] With so encouraging a response, the Society decided to formalize and expand these efforts by providing more appropriate facilities; they erected an imposing building to house the growing Church of the Epiphany. It was consecrated on August 24, 1833.[43]

Both new churches--the Holy Evangelists and Epiphany--flourished in the years following this founding; the annual reports of both mission churches regularly presented a picture of service and popularity. Indeed the congregations of both these Episcopal missions gradually began to assume the character of established parishes. They evolved steadily towards the status of self-sufficient free churches, and away

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[41]P.E.C.M.S., "Minutes, Second Annual Meeting, January 14, 1833," Churchman, III (August 24, 1833), 507.

[42]P.E.C.M.S., Third Annual Report, p. 12.

[43]Churchman, III (August 31, 1833), 510.

from mission station dependence. In this development, the fledgling congregations received the active encouragement of the parent society. As early as April of 1833, the executive committee granted mission churches the right to raise and expend money for special parish purposes and to have charge of ordinary repairs.[44] In 1838, the executive committee agreed to permit the individual churches to retain the proceeds of each week's collection. In return, the congregations would assume total responsibility for their churches' operating expenses. (Though the Society was still responsible for the minister's salary.) "It is of great importance," the Board of Trustees explained, "that these persons should be induced and encouraged . . . to take a deep interest in . . . and exert themselves for the promotion of this Society."[45]

By 1840, the congregations of these mission churches were behaving very much like the congregations of a number of other respectable, if hardly fashionable, churches in and around Manhattan. In that year, the parishioners of Epiphany were first able to assume the entire cost of their Sunday and infant day schools. Indeed they continually expanded the day school, gradually adding higher grades and thus including older children.[46] In 1843 Epiphany's

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[44]P.E.C.M.S., "Executive Committee Minutes, April 11, 1833."

[45]P.E.C.M.S., "Executive Committee Minutes, January 30, 1838, April 24, 1838."

[46]P.E.C.M.S., Ninth Annual Report, pp. 5-7.

congregation hired an assistant minister to aid their pastor.[47] Between 1837 and 1840, the church undertook, as well, an ambitious program of remodeling; they redecorated the interior of the Church, purchased a "valuable" baptismal font, and contributed nearly $3,000 towards other phases of the face-lifting. (The women of the congregation took the lead; their sensitivity toward the church's social role made a valuable contribution to its ultimate respectability.)[48] Epiphany's congregation began, as well--even during the still difficult years of the early 1840's--to give financial support to a number of general diocesan charities.[49] The congregation of the Holy Evangelists, while not as prosperous, was still able to pay its operating expenses, contribute toward the support of their infant and Sunday schools, and to some general diocesan charities.[50]

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[47]Lot Jones, "Report of the Church of the Epiphany," Journal of the Proceedings of the 59th Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the Diocese of New York, 1843 (New York, 1843), p. 152.

[48]P.E.C.M.S., Sixth Annual Report for the Year 1837 (New York, 1837), p. 9; P.E.C.M.S., Ninth Annual Report, p. 7.

[49]Lot Jones, "Report of the Church of the Epiphany," Journal of the Proceedings of the 57th Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the Diocese of New York, 1841 (New York, 1841), p. 133.

[50]P.E.C.M.S., Sixth Annual Report, p. 7; Benjamin Evans, "Report of the Church of the Holy Evangelists," Journal of the Proceedings of the 58th Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the Diocese of New York, 1842 (New York, 1842), p. 117. It is interesting to note the manner in which the Holy Evangelists was actually remodeled. One parishioner, an architect, drew up plans for the interior.

What kind of parishioners were these, so quick to remodel their church, so willing to support an assistant minister, so eager to contribute to foreign missions? The majority, quite clearly, were not unskilled workers, domestics, the unemployed and unemployable. Such individuals might send their children to the mission church's Sunday school, but the churches' regular communicants came from a distinctly more "elevated" social and economic stratum. The congregation of the Holy Evangelists, their first minister, Benjamin Cutler, reported in 1833, consisted of three major elements. First were Episcopalians who had, amidst the social and emotional turbulence of the metropolis, drifted away from God. The members of the second group were as well victims of the city--Episcopalians no longer able to afford pew rents as a result of financial reverses. Finally, there were the young men of good family come from the country to make their fortunes.[51] Several years later, Cutler found no reason to modify this analysis. His congregation, he explained, was made up of the

> . . . honest, industrious sober and respectable
> . . . the utterly vagrant and depraved poor either wholly declining or soon discontinuing attendance

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Another contributed a marble font; a third, an upholsterer, gave the furnishings for the pulpit and desk. The ladies of the parish raised an additional $300 at their church fair. Benjamin Evans, "Report of the Church of the Holy Evangelists," Journal of the Proceedings of the 59th Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the Diocese of New York, 1843 (New York, 1843), p. 148.

[51] P.E.C.M.S., "First Quarterly Meeting . . . 1833."

> upon public worship; or else, by their continued attendance, gradually changing their habits and appearance and becoming assimilated with the purer and better classes, with which they were brought into spiritual association.

Many of his parishioners, the minister added, were English emigrants, Church of England communicants before leaving their native island.[52]

This profile of the mission congregation changed very little during the following years. In 1836, E. B. Kellogg, in his annual report to the Board of Managers, stated that the city's honest and industrious artisans and mechanics made up the great bulk of their communicants. "They are," he explained with enthusiasm, "an industrious, respectable, and most interesting class."[53] And certainly they were in their relative economic stability an atypical element among the poor; collections in the mission churches, the executive committee explained in 1837, had always accounted for a substantial portion of the Society's income.[54] The creation of such viable congregations was clearly consistent with the original hopes of the Society's founders. Or at least some of them.[55]

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[52]P.E.C.M.S., Third Annual Report, p. 5.

[53]Letter from E. B. Kellogg to Benjamin Onderdonk, reprinted P.E.C.M.S., Fifth Annual Report for the Year 1836 (New York, 1836), pp. 9-10.

[54]P.E.C.M.S., "Executive Committee Minutes, February 23, 1837."

[55]In the Acts of Incorporation, for example (drawn up in April, 1833, though not enacted until 1838), the "objects" of

With such encouraging results, the Mission Society's committees were anxious to expand their program of Sunday schools and religious lending libraries. Most importantly, they hoped to establish additional free churches. (As early as 1835, the executive committee had considered the matter, had even approached the vestry of Trinity Church in hopes of purchasing a lot for a third mission chapel.) The managers, however, found it difficult to raise even a portion of the $10,000 needed to build another church. McVickar suggested then that the Society follow the same policy he had; they should, that is, establish Sunday schools and informal services in likely sections of the city. If both residents and philanthropists responded favorably, the possibility of creating another church might then be appropriately discussed.[56]

The Society acceded to McVickar's suggestion and in the years that followed held informal church services and

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the Society "are declared to be to provide by building, purchase, hiring or otherwise, so many churches, at different points in the City of New-York, . . . in which churches the seats shall be free, and to provide suitable clergymen to act as missionaries in the said churches." An Act to Incorporate the New York Protestant Episcopal City Mission Society (New York, 1838). During the first year of the Society's operations, Bishop Onderdonk confirmed this emphasis by stating that the principal purpose of the Society was to provide attractive free churches for immigrants of the Anglican communion and for those "young persons of both sexes, belonging to respectable and pious, but not wealthy families of our communion . . . resorting to this city for purposes of business . . . ." Churchman, II (October 13, 1832), 325. Cf. James Eastburn, "Sermon," Churchman, II (December 15, 1832), 363; Churchman, II (April 28, 1832), 230.

[56]P.E.C.M.S., "Executive Committee Minutes, May 18, 1835, and November 11, 1835"; P.E.C.M.S., Fourth Annual Report for the Year 1835 (New York, 1835), p. 9.

established a number of Sunday schools in the northwest section of the city. Here few churches existed and the Society hoped to form a congregation in a neighborhood similar to Vandewater or Stanton Streets.[57] In 1842, the Society at last was able to establish a third mission church on Christopher Street on the city's west side. It was consecrated on March 15, 1842, the Mission Church of St. Matthew.[58]

We have pictured an enterprise both meaningful and seemingly vigorous. For a dozen years, the Episcopal City Mission Society had sought with increasing vigor to reach the great mass of New York's unchurched and often irreligious poor. The Society had established three free churches; it had instituted a network of Sunday schools and an elaborate program of domestic visitation and outdoor relief. Yet, paradoxically, the Society had, by the early 1840's, lost much of its support among the city's regular Episcopal parishes; its treasury was empty, its debts constantly increasing. Finally, in 1847, its financial embarrassments no longer endurable, the Society was forced to disband.

How could this have happened? What factors could have brought about the demise of so ambitious and, in many ways,

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[57]P.E.C.M.S., "Executive Committee Minutes, June 14, 1836, February 23, 1837, May 16, 1837"; P.E.C.M.S., Fifth Annual Report, pp. 6-12; Sixth Annual Report, pp. 10-12.

[58]Wilson, Centennial History, p. 391.

so successful an undertaking? Beginning in the late 1830's three separate and largely unrelated developments had begun to compromise the Society's activities, eroded its support, shattered its coherence of purpose--and led irrevocably to its dissolution.

The Panic of 1837 was the most obvious factor impairing the Society's growth. The depression persisted until 1843 and 1844, and New York's Episcopal laity was hard hit. Newly established congregations were particularly embarrassed; confronted with heavy mortgages and greatly reduced pew rentals, they repented the ambitious building programs they had undertaken during the halcyon days of the early thirties. The vestry of Trinity Church, with its extraordinary financial resources, stepped in to save a number of these new churches.[59]

In November of 1837--at the height of the panic--the Episcopal City Mission Society also called upon Trinity's aid. Bishop Onderdonk, still the Mission Society's president, served as intermediary; the Trinity corporation, he reported to the Board of Managers on the twenty-seventh of November, agreed to lend them $10,000, taking as security mortgages on the two mission churches. The executive committee immediately used half this sum to meet impending mortgage payments.

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[59]See, for a case study of one of these churches, E. Clowes Chorley, The Centennial History of St. Bartholomew's Church in the City of New York, 1835-1935 (New York, 1935).

They were forced to dissipate the other $5,000 in paying the Society's normal operating expenses.[60]

By the beginning of 1838, the Society's financial situation had become critical. It owed some $27,000 for the construction of its mission churches; annual interest payments alone amounted to almost $2,000. The salaries of its full-time missionaries meant another annual obligation of some $3,500; operating expenses for the Sunday schools and mission chapels amounted to nearly $1,500. Yet in 1837, the churches and Episcopal laity of the city had contributed only $2,200 to the Society--to meet these fixed expenses of nearly $7,000.[61]

The Society had to devise new stratagems. On January 30, 1838, the executive committee asked the mission church congregations to assume financial responsibility for their churches, with the exception of the minister's salary.[62] That same year, the Society's Board of Managers was able to secure an increase in the subvention granted the Society each year by Trinity (from $1,100 to $1,800).[63] But individual church contributions still lagged; indeed,

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[60]P.E.C.M.S., "Minutes of Special Meeting held at the Church of the Holy Evangelists, November 27, 1837."

[61]P.E.C.M.S., "Executive Committee Minutes, January 30, 1838."

[62]For the effect of this decision on the internal development of these churches and for their readiness to accept this responsibility, supra, pp. 213 - 215.

[63]P.E.C.M.S., Eighth Annual Report for the Year 1839 (New York, 1839), p. 4.

they decreased during the late 1830's and early 1840's. In 1835, for example, parishioners of the city's several Episcopal parishes had contributed $4,450, in 1842 but $796.56. By 1845, individual church contributions had dwindled almost to nothing; Christ Church, for example, which had been instrumental in founding the Society fourteen years before, gave only nineteen dollars.[64]

By 1843, the Protestant Episcopal City Mission Society faced bankruptcy. Though it owned three churches valued at $50,000, the buildings were heavily mortgaged; each year interest payments of $2,500 had to be met. The Executive Committee, in their report for 1843, complained that a handful of wealthy Episcopalians maintained the Society, while the average churchgoer ignored its needs. "The Society has not grown as it should have because the average well-to-do Episcopalian has lost interest in its aims and has failed to support it."[65]

The Society was able to struggle on for a few final years, its future increasingly problematical. In June of 1847, however, its condition seemed terminal; the mortgage on the Church of the Holy Evangelists had already been foreclosed, and it was scheduled to be sold on the twenty-first. The executive committee called an emergency meeting of

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[64]For a summary of the contributions, see P.E.C.M.S., Annual Reports, 4th-14th (1835-1845).

[65]P.E.C.M.S., Twelfth Annual Report for the Year 1843 (New York, 1843), p. 12.

members and friends. Only Trinity and Grace, among the city's Episcopal churches, favored continuing support for the Society. The other churches refused when requested to hold a special collection to aid the mission society and its work. As the meeting adjourned, the Society's only hope lay in the possibility that Trinity might again step in to assume their obligations.[66] But this was not to be; the Society disbanded in the fall of 1847.

The Reverend John McVickar, a founder and for many years its vice-president, wrote the Society's final report to the diocesan convention. The churches of the diocese, he began diplomatically, had decided to limit their mission work to the poor within their own parish boundaries. Thus their decision to discontinue support of the Mission Society. Without funds, McVickar explained, the Society had been forced to dispose of its property; the church buildings had been given to their respective congregations with the condition that they remain free churches. The Columbia professor, with obvious feeling, sharply questioned the wisdom of these decisions. The poor of the city could not be found within the parish limits of the denomination's wealthier churches, those most capable of supporting mission work. The abjectly destitute rarely lived even in the immediate vicinity of those respectable lower middle-class neighborhoods in which a stable free church congregation

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[66]P.E.C.M.S., "Minutes, Special Meeting of the City Mission Society, June 16, 1847."

might be expected to develop. (McVickar was somewhat overstating this picture of residential exclusiveness.) The demise of the Mission Society implied as well the end of any hope that lower-class New Yorkers might be gathered into the Episcopal fold.

McVickar concluded this lament for his spiritual child by noting the real contributions which the Society had made during its brief life. It had been instrumental in calling the attention of all New Yorkers--regardless of denomination--to the existence and needs of the truly destitute. More specifically, the Society had helped commit New York's Episcopalians to the principle of establishing and supporting free churches.[67] He might have added that the Society had provided valuable experience for himself and other humanitarian New Yorkers, insights and knowledge which seemed increasingly important as, in the next generation, the problems of urban poverty increased enormously.

The Society did not die completely, however; McVickar and a few dedicated supporters continued to hold formalistic annual meetings so that the Society's charter might not lapse. And this faith was not misplaced. Fifteen years later, McVickar was elected chairman of a meeting of New York

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[67]John McVickar, "Report of the New York Protestant Episcopal City Mission Society," Journal of the Proceedings of the 63rd Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the Diocese of New York, 1847 (New York, 1847), pp. 90-92.

Episcopalians which succeeded in revitalizing the dormant Society.[68]

Though the depression was of undoubted significance in bringing a halt to the Mission Society's activities, it cannot alone explain its demise. By the early 1840's, the worst of the depression was past. Business had revived, building expanded. At the same time, however, contributions to the Episcopal Mission Society reached a new low.

Another explanation can be found in the schism which rent the Episcopal Diocese of New York throughout the 1840's. These years marked the height of the tractarian controversy within American Episcopalianism. The opposition provoked by the Oxford theologians in the New York diocese was particularly bitter, a bitterness which corresponded to the power and influence of avowedly High-Church leaders within the Diocese. Finally Low-Church leaders succeeded after a garishly notorious misconduct trial in ousting Bishop Onderdonk, principal spokesman for the High-Church position in New York--and, unfortunately for the Episcopal City Mission Society, its president and chief backer. (In 1844, Benjamin Onderdonk was accused of "immorality and impurity" by several Low-Church bishops; the following year he was tried by a special ecclesiastical

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[68]The P.E.C.M.S. has the minutes of several of these pro forma meetings held between June 16, 1847, and April 28, 1864. It was at this last meeting that a younger generation of Episcopal philanthropists reactivated the P.E.C.M.S., making it again an active institution working with New York's poor.

court, suspended, and removed as bishop of the diocese. The New York Diocese remained without a permanent bishop until 1861.) It was the conclusion of High-Church sympathizers at the time, and for years afterwards--and of the trial's most recent historian as well--that Onderdonk's trial violated the precepts of common law and the constitution of the Protestant Episcopal Church of America. To High-Church Episcopalians throughout the nineteenth century, Onderdonk seemed a martyr, the victim of a cynical frame-up.[69]

The heritage of bitterness left by Onderdonk's removal made any successful organization on the diocesan level extremely difficult. Without a strong bishop to hold the diocese together, individual churches deserted existing organizations and showed little willingness to cooperate in joint charitable and missionary endeavors. Programs associated closely with Onderdonk inherited the rancor surrounding his name. Low-Church Episcopalians now felt completely free to support the interdenominational and

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[69] The Proceedings of the Court Convened Under the Third Canon of 1844, in the City of New York On Tuesday, December 10, 1844, for the Trial of the Right Rev. Benjamin T. Onderdonk, D.D. Bishop of New York; on a Presentment Made by the Bishops of Virginia, Tennessee and Georgia, By Authority of the Court (New York, 1845). For a modern scholarly study of the Onderdonk trial and the background, see E. Clowes Chorley, "Benjamin Tredwell Onderdonk, Fourth Bishop of New York," Historical Magazine of the Protestant Episcopal Church, IX (March, 1940), 1-51. Bitterness felt by many Episcopalians over the trial of Bishop Onderdonk persisted far into the century, Onderdonk assuming many of the characteristics of a "martyred" figure. Even James Grant Wilson in the official diocesan centennial history pictures the trial and the refusal to reinstate as punishment by Low-Church Episcopalians for Onderdonk's High-Church practices. Wilson, Centennial History, pp. 173-175.

evangelical alternatives to the exclusively Episcopal societies favored by Bishop Onderdonk. Indeed, such Low-Church ministers as Tyng and James Milnor had long been associated with the evangelical American Sunday School Union, the American Tract Society and the New York City Tract Society. Parallel Episcopal societies received the support of Episcopalians more sympathetic to the High-Church position.[70]

Both the depression of 1837 and the removal of Bishop Onderdonk were problems in a sense external to the Mission Society itself. A third factor in its dissolution originated in a confusion of aims within the Society.

Its leaders had embarked upon two essentially different kinds of work. One was their valiant attempt to reach the truly submerged in society, those with no religious orientation, no stable economic identity. Household visits, work with children, temporal relief--all these were avenues through which such potential (if unlikely) Episcopalians might be reached.[71] A second kind of work was less ambitious, yet as we have seen, more rewarding in its promise of immediate and tangible success. This was an attempt to

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[70]Supra, fn. 1.

[71]Indeed, Benjamin Cutler, in an early report, mentioned that the P.E.C.M.S. founders had originally intended to support several missionaries who would visit the poor in their homes. The entire free-church aspect of the Society's work had been undertaken, he then asserted, as an afterthought. P.E.C.M.S., "Executive Committee Minutes, First Quarterly Meeting, April 13, 1833."

bring "respectable" artisans, clerks, and small tradesmen within the Episcopal fold; such individuals might be reached by more traditional means--access to free churches and the influence of dignified and improving services conducted according to the Church of England's Book of Common Prayer.

But could both of the Society's praiseworthy goals be attained? It did not seem that they could; the Society's managers soon discovered that the pursuit of such divergent aims created tensions within their organization--tensions reflecting American social attitudes in the 1830's and 1840's.

The strain of this ambitious program told first upon the minister who was expected to serve both as pastor to a free church and as missionary to the destitute. Benjamin Cutler, the Society's first city missionary, resigned early in March, 1833. He was, he explained to the executive committee, no longer physically able to serve as both pastor and missionary to the poor. At one point, Cutler elaborated, he had considered giving up his work among the destitute and concentrating exclusively upon his pastoral duties. But to do so, he felt, would quickly transform the mission church into a "settled and regular parish." And this was not the intention of the Society's founders. Only by undertaking the role of both pastor and of missionary could he hope to accomplish the Society's dual aims.[72]

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[72]P.E.C.M.S., "Executive Committee Minutes, March 14, 1833."

Yet a transformation could not be avoided. Gradually, the Society came to feel that there was no alternative to treating their mission stations as "settled and regular parishes." The very poor, as Cutler pointed out in 1834, did not have the makings of regular and reliable parishioners. They could be induced only rarely to attend church. They might be illiterate and completely unfamiliar with formal church services; often they lacked proper clothing. Unstable, always in search of new jobs or lodgings, always in danger of eviction, they seemed to move almost monthly. As the mission churches prospered and their parochial responsibilities increased, the city missionaries had inevitably less and less time to seek out such unfortunates and endeavor to bring them within the Episcopal flock.[73]

The mission appellation, on the other hand, alienated many of the worthy and deserving, those respectable if not well-to-do New Yorkers whom the city missionaries numbered among their most reliable parishioners. "America's clerks, tradesmen, and mechanics," the Board of Managers warned in 1836, "have every expectation of advancing themselves socially and financially. With few exceptions they will, in a short time, become respectable and prosperous members of society." The Society estimated that there were seven thousand clerks alone in their city. Often educated and ambitious, they might be the sons of rural tradesmen or

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[73] Ibid.; supra, fn. 50.

well-to-do farmers--or from middle-class urban families. Certainly such aspiring New Yorkers did not like to think of themselves as worshipping in a charity mission, possibly kneeling next to a resident of the Five Points or Corlear's Hook. To attract and maintain the loyalties of these new parishioners, the Society's ministers found themselves forced to transform their mission stations into free churches, similar to those already established by Presbyterian and Congregational philanthropists.[74]

By 1836, the Society had begun to consider the formal separation of its two functions. This could be accomplished by treating their mission churches as free churches--and at the same time employing a third minister with the sole task of visiting in the city's slums. At meetings during February and March, 1836, the executive committee voted to make important changes in their two mission churches. The name free church, they decided, should formally be substituted for that of mission church and the churches themselves be made more attractive physically. They seemed too shabby to appeal to those aspiring New Yorkers most likely to find a lasting home in the Episcopal Church. At this same meeting, the executive committee considered the question of hiring a missionary-at-large to work among the very poor.[75]

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[74]P.E.C.M.S., Sixth Annual Report, pp. 13-16. As early as January, 1833, Benjamin Cutler had argued that one of the chief functions of the P.E.C.M.S. must be to attract and save "the intelligent, inquiring artisan classes," an opinion seconded by none other than Society founder Benjamin Onderdonk. P.E.C.M.S., "Minutes, Second Annual Meeting," printed in Churchman, II (January 19, 1833), 382.

[75]P.E.C.M.S., "Executive Committee Minutes, February 23, 1836, and March 8, 1836."

During the ensuing year, the Society experimented with a program pointing in this direction; the executive committee established a third mission station in a slum neighborhood in the city's northwesternmost corner.[76] After a year of this experiment, the committee voted to hire a missionary-at-large to visit exclusively among the poor.[77] Without fixed parish duties, this clergyman was to circulate at random, leading prayer meetings and distributing charity. "His duty," the Board of Managers stated in explaining these changes to the Sixth Annual Meeting,

> will be to explore the abodes of ignorance and wretchedness, and to give himself up, in a devoted Christian spirit to the sole task of instructing and amending their wretched inmates. . . . his teaching will be from house to house; his sermons, the promptings of the occasion delivered . . . at the bedside of the sick, in the abodes of wretchedness.[78]

Only in this way could the truly destitute of the city be discovered and possibly converted.[79] In discussing the mission church's work and his own experiences as missionary-at-large, E. B. Kellogg commented in 1836:

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[76] Supra, p. 219 .

[77] P.E.C.M.S., "Executive Committee Minutes, February 23, 1837."

[78] P.E.C.M.S., Sixth Annual Report, pp. 17-19, 24.

[79] The missionary for the third mission station had emphasized in his 1836 report that no minister burdened with pastoral duties would have the time or energy to visit the truly destitute. P.E.C.M.S., Fifth Annual Report, p. 8. Cf. P.E.C.M.S., Sixth Annual Report, p. 13.

> They [the mission churches] have furnished to the most deserving and respectable class of the poor, the means of assembling, like their more favored brethren, for the purpose of our common salvation. . . . The City Mission Churches have, indeed, advanced one step down toward the great valley of the poor, and it is a most important step; but the great multitude is still below, and has not yet been reached.[80]

After only a few months of mission work, Kellogg reported that he had made some tentative progress in reaching these unfortunate multitudes. A few at least from among even the most abandoned could, he found, be brought into the Episcopal flock through house-to-house visitation and "personal ministration."[81]

At first the Society hoped that their missionary-at-large might make the whole city his mission field. By the late 1830's, however, they had limited his efforts to the city's northwest corner (from Canal to Fourteenth Street and from Broadway to the Hudson). Between the spring of 1837 and that of 1838, the Society's missionary-at-large made 3,358 visits "to the sick, the poor, the careless and the vicious," distributing tracts, prayer books, and $500 in charity. His "parishioners" were the same lost souls who attracted the assiduous attentions of his evangelical contemporaries. In 1839, the Society's missionary began to visit prisons and hospitals as well, praying and distributing Bibles and tracts to the sick and criminal. Within the next

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[80] P.E.C.M.S., Sixth Annual Report, p. 12.

[81] Ibid., pp. 9-11.

two years, he was able to organize several Sunday schools with an enrollment of 250. In connection with these varied activities, the hard-working Kellogg continued as well to distribute charity, serving as a kind of semi-official almoner for the charitable of the diocese. In 1841, for example, he received $876 from private persons to distribute among the deserving.[82]

But when New York's Episcopalians ceased supporting their city mission society, two of its free churches and the position of missionary-at-large died. Only the Church of the Epiphany survived, drawing as it did upon the solidly lower middle-class streets in its immediate vicinity. The Holy Evangelists and St. Mathews, both established in essentially slum areas, were unable--as the depression lengthened--to maintain a stable congregation; without the support of the city's established churches, they soon disbanded, or moved.[83]

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[82]P.E.C.M.S., Seventh Annual Report, pp. 8, 12; P.E.C.M.S., Eighth Annual Report, p. 13; P.E.C.M.S., Tenth Annual Report for the Year 1841 (New York, 1841), pp. 9-11. By 1841, Benjamin Evans had replaced Kellogg as missionary-at-large. His report appeared in the Proceedings of the 57th Convention, p. 131.

[83]The Church of the Holy Evangelists, for example, remained on Vandewater Street until 1851, when, bankrupt, Trinity Church rescued it, giving it the building known as "Old St. George's Chapel." Holy Evangelists now became a chapel of St. George's, though its missionary or pastor was appointed with the approval of the vestry of Trinity Church. Over the years the ties that held this mission chapel to St. George's increased. Anstice, St. George's, pp. 191-193, 211-214.

The Protestant Episcopal City Mission Society had undertaken too much. It could not support three free churches, a roving missionary, and randomly placed Sunday schools. But the tensions that arose within the Society's own churches between the needs of their lower middle-class parishioners and the poorer recipients of Episcopal charity, even the financial and administrative problems of maintaining two quite different programs, cannot alone explain the steady decrease in contributions to the Society. And it is this drying up of financial support which was, of course, the immediate cause of the Society's dissolution. Why did New York's Episcopalians lose faith in the work of their city mission?

The evidence indicates clearly that their disaffection was related to an increasingly negative attitude toward the poor. This disenchantment becomes apparent in even a casual reading of the Society's official statements. Their words demonstrate not only a gradual shift in attitude toward the poor, but a striking decrease in the optimism which had encouraged the Society in its founding years; one does not willingly support programs which promise only frustration. The increasingly bleak views of the Society's managers toward the prospective objects of their charity seems to coincide with the Panic of 1837 and the lingering depression which it precipitated.

During the euphoric days of the early 1830's--when prosperity seemed a permanent condition of American life--

prosperous New Yorkers could view their less fortunate fellow citizens with sympathy and a certain optimism. Even the poorest and most stubbornly irreligious seemed to pose no threat to society generally. Many might be converted, and once converted could be elevated socially and economically through prayers, education, and the judicious distribution of charity.[84] "This transformation of character," the Churchman commented in 1832,

> we propose to effect by the simple agency of plain instruction and cheering counsel, conveyed through the abodes of the destitute by the familiar visitation of those more elevated in life. . . . the ultimate object--is to elevate and better the condition of the poor by inculcating the principles of an efficient morality, and calling forth . . . a spirit of independence and self-estimation which will produce habits of thoughtfulness and reliance on their own resources.[85]

Even the increasing numbers of European immigrants arriving during these buoyant years did little to shake this optimism; immigrants were simply a new and challenging mission field. The executive committee urged the charitable to provide these new Americans with free churches and schools. "The Patriot citizen," they admonished, "should be prompt to provide for intelligence and virtue among the lower classes, as the safeguard of our free institutions."[86]

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[84]P.E.C.M.S., "Executive Committee Minutes, First Quarterly Report . . . 1832"; Churchman, I (November 12, 1831), 135; cf. P.E.C.M.S., Sixth Annual Report, p. 17.

[85]Churchman, II (November 17, 1832), 346.

[86]P.E.C.M.S., fund-raising public letter, printed in Churchman, II (April 28, 1832), 230; P.E.C.M.S., "Executive Committee Minutes, First Quarterly Report, March 4, 1832."

As late as the spring of 1837, the Society's Board of Managers continued to deny the existence of classes or castes in America, or that an enmity existed between rich and poor. Society, as they saw it, was highly mobile; through misfortune some Americans were unable to provide for themselves, but these were individual, accidental cases. The American artisan and laborer seemed surely and inevitably to be rising into the middle class.

> In the older countries of Europe there is a CLASS OF POOR: families born to poverty, living in poverty, dying in poverty. With us there are none such. In our bounteous land individuals alone are poor; but they form no poor class, because with them poverty is but a transient evil . . . save paupers and vagabonds . . . all else form one common class of citizens; some more, others less advanced in the career of honorable independence; but none without having in their hands, under God's providence, the means of attaining it; and all, with individual exceptions, going on, by industry and economy, to acquire it.[87]

An encouraging picture indeed; it was hard to imagine social conflict within so beneficent a system.

But even before 1837, traces of bitterness and hostility crept into the statements of the Society's ministers and managers. In 1834, for example, the Reverend Hugh Smith, missionary of the Church of the Holy Evangelists, complained that "the utterly vagrant and depraved poor either wholly declin[ed], or soon discontinued attendance upon public worship." His congregation, he reported, had not the slightest admixture from among the ranks of the extremely

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[87] P.E.C.M.S., Sixth Annual Report, pp. 15-16.

poor; it was made up of "the honest, industrious, sober and respectable . . ."[88] In the spring of 1837 the Society's executive committee warned ominously of "that fermenting mass of vice and ignorance which . . . /threatens/ the safety of our social and political institutions." "Even with us, therefore," the Board of Managers continued in their Sixth Annual Report,

> the horrors of a demoralized metropolis are not all in the distance; . . . out of the dark cloud of infidelity and vice are heard the rumblings of the coming storm. . . . a fearful struggle . . . against peace, order and religion.[89]

(And this in the same annual report in which the committee had bravely denied the existence of a permanently depressed class in the United States.)

This discouraging and hostile statement was made at the height of the city's speculative prosperity; the impending depression was not even suspected. The causes of the Managers' disillusionment seemed to lie both in the difficulty of recruiting encouraging numbers of the poor to mission-church membership and, as well, in the city's rapidly increasing population of poor and unskilled immigrants. Immigration, the Society complained in the spring of 1837 (in sharp contrast to the optimism expressed in 1832) was clearly bringing with it the social problems which beset European cities. "Whatever is in these foreigners of vice, infidelity

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[88] P.E.C.M.S., Third Annual Report, pp. 4-5.

[89] P.E.C.M.S., Sixth Annual Report, pp. 21, 24.

or crime naturally settles here, adding new strength to what is evil among us."[90] After six years of effort, New York's Episcopalians had begun to think of the poor not simply as unfortunate neighbors--with whom one might well share one's church pew--but as an alien and inferior class. Only a few among them seemed capable of salvation and these only as a result of extraordinary efforts.

Within another six months the numbers of indigent in New York had quadrupled. The Panic of 1837, starting in the fall, threw thousands out of work; banks suspended, commercial houses--including some of the city's largest--declared themselves bankrupt. Much of the optimism of the early Jackson years abruptly evaporated. By the late 1830's and early 1840's, the poor had come to seem a class apart, a moral cancer within the body politic--impervious to the moral therapy of religion; a growing undertone of disquiet had become a dominant theme. The characteristics associated previously only with the criminal and the alcoholic--that is, with the "vicious" poor--were now applied generally to the unemployed and indigent. With 1838, the words "poverty" and "vice" appeared almost invariably linked in the Society's publications.[91] No longer did its workers expect to save the adult poor of New York's slums. They hoped at best to "rescue" the children of the poor,

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[90] Ibid., p. 20.

[91] For examples of the Society's increasing alienation from the poor, see: P.E.C.M.S., Seventh Annual Report, p. 9; and Eleventh Annual Report, p. 6.

substituting the wholesome influence of the Sunday school teacher and the charitable visitor for that of drunken and dissolute parents. "The mass of vice and poverty," their missionary-at-large reported, "is yearly accumulating with frightful rapidity."[92] One could not easily sympathize with such alien-seeming, threatening masses. "Untaught and unreclaimed," the Society explained in its Fourteenth Annual Report,

> they poison the moral atmosphere amid which they live, they vitiate the characters of the young who come within their influence, they train their thousands of children to the ways of ungodliness, they endanger the safety of our Institutions, and they unsettle all the securities of property.[93]

The poor were unreclaimable and unappealing. By 1847 few Episcopalians were willing to give continued financial support to an organization that sought to aid and reform such dubious objects of charity.

Thus a conjunction of factors, the changing city, the depression, the overly ambitious aims of the managers, partisan rancor within the church, and class hostilities, all combined to thwart the brave hopes of New York's first Protestant Episcopal City Mission Society.

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[92] P.E.C.M.S., Eighth Annual Report, p. 13.

[93] P.E.C.M.S., Fourteenth Annual Report, p. 14.

PART II. PROTESTANTS AND FIVE POINTERS. THE CITY MISSION MOVEMENT, 1837-1870

CHAPTER VII

By the mid-1840's, the depression had passed; prosperity had returned, and New York entered a period of unprecedented expansion. The population, relatively stable during the depression, increased explosively. Between 1845 and 1850, the city grew from 371,223 to 515,394. By 1860, over 800,000 souls crowded Manhattan, and buoyant New Yorkers predicted that within a generation as many as two million would live or work on their island.[1]

Increased wealth and size accompanied this rapid population growth. Finance and commerce had, by the 1860's, come to dominate Manhattan Island from the Battery to Canal Street--the streets south of Canal were crowded with newly built warehouses and six- and seven-story commercial buildings. Banks, office buildings, pretentious railroad stations lined Wall and William, Franklin and Worth streets. Impressive marble-fronted hotels and shops stretched up Broadway as far as Fourteenth

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[1]Valentine, Manual of the Corporation of the City of New York for the Year 1850 (New York, 1850), p. 399; Valentine, Manual of the Corporation of the City of New York for the Year 1861 (New York, 1861), p. 446.

Street and Union Square.[2] By the mid-1840's, the Minutes of the Common Council became crowded with ordinances for the opening and paving or widening of streets, the extension of the sewer system, the lighting of new streets. By mid-century, gas lighting extended far up Broadway to 33rd Street, while streets even farther north were already graded and surfaced--the lots lining them long since subdivided, sold, and resold.[3]

The respectable and the wealthy followed the new streets and gas lights north. By 1846, the inhabitants of once fashionable St. John's Park, College Place, and Rector Street had sold out to commercial investors and moved to Washington Square, Lafayette Place, or north along Fifth Avenue. As early as 1845, the Evening Post described recently completed private residences which had cost $20,000, $40,000--in one case as much as $70,000. A few years later, Philip Hone, with the irony possible to a member of an older generation, commented upon the marble

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[2]Gleason's Pictorial, III (November 1, 1852), 317; Valentine, Manual of the Corporation of the City of New York for the Year 1865 (New York, 1865), pp. 635-636, 652; New York Commercial Advertiser, January 10, 1845, May 5, 1845, May 19, 1845, January 12, 1846, April 2, 1846; New York Evening Post, February 20, 1845, August 21, 1847, October 2, 1851; New York Herald, May 24, 1851; Hone, Diary (ed., Tuckerman), II, 245.

[3]For a description of streets opened and widened from 1837-1856, see: Valentine, Manual of the Corporation of the City of New York for the Year 1857 (New York, 1857), pp. 535-541; Common Council of the City of New York, Ordinances, Resolutions, etc. Passed by the Board of Aldermen and the Board of Assistant Aldermen and Approved by the Mayor (New York, /1850/), pp. 372, 485, 488; New York Evening Post, April 23, 1849, January 17, 1851.

"palace" commissioned by "a simple citizen of our republican city, a steamboat builder."[4]

But not all New Yorkers shared equally in this growing affluence. Many, even among the middle class, were hard pressed by the rapidly increasing cost of living. Real estate values and rents seemed particularly exorbitant. "A good convenient dwelling with modern improvements," one observer commented in 1869, "is worth a small fortune on this Island. . . . Nineteen-twentieths of the people here might therefore as rationally expect to have Stewart's income . . . as to find themselves holders in fee-simple of a private dwelling in any 'respectable' quarter of town." By the 1860's, indeed even earlier, New York exhibited a developing commuter pattern; each year a substantial number of business people who worked in downtown Manhattan built homes in Brooklyn, Williamsburg, and the upper reaches of Manhattan Island. Bemused and sometimes alarmed observers had already commented routinely on this trend which threatened to make the city proper a dwelling place for the very rich and very poor alone.[5]

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[4]Hone, Diary (ed,, Tuckerman), II, 355, 269-270; New York Herald, February 26, 1845; New York Daily Times, June 15, 1857; New York Evening Post, January 14, 1846; New York Commercial Advertiser, April 2, 1846. See, also, Stokes, Iconography, V, 1787, 1796-1797, 1842, 1871.

[5]Junius Henri Browne, The Great Metropolis: A Mirror of New York (Hartford, 1869), p. 86; A. W. White, Annual Report of the City Inspector of the Number of Deaths and Interments in the City of New York during the Year 1850 (New York, 1851), p. 442; Thomas Butler Gunn, The Physiology of New-York Boarding-Houses (New York, 1857), pp. 32, 267-268, 280-281. City missionary Samuel B. Halliday, remarking on this commuter pattern

Yet a comparatively small proportion of New Yorkers could make use of ferries and surface railroads to escape the city's high costs. Newly arrived immigrants, women wage-earners, Negroes, the unskilled generally--all were trapped by ignorance, by segregation, by the need to be close to employment opportunities in the city's congested lower wards. These were the tenants of New York's rapidly multiplying tenements.

New York's poverty had kept pace with her commercial expansion; the rich had grown richer and the poor correspondingly poorer. In 1851, for example, a relatively prosperous year, the Superintendent of the Out-Door Poor gave cash support to 12,000 residents of the city and free fuel to another 26,000. Of the 3,450 inmates of the penitentiary that year, over 2,500 were vagrants, men and women, that is, without any apparent means of support. Large numbers of other penniless New Yorkers found refuge in the city's alms-house, hospitals, and reformatory. Each year these numbers mounted.[6] By 1855,

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in 1859, commented sadly: "We may be said (comparatively), to have no longer a middling class in this city." Halliday, Lost and Found, p. 202. For corroboratory evidence in contemporary descriptions of New York, see: James Dabney McCabe, The Secrets of the Great City: A Work Descriptive of the Virtues and Vices, other Mysteries, Miseries and Crimes of New York City (Philadelphia, 1868), p. 39, and James Miller, Miller's New York as It Is; or Stranger's Guide-Book to the Cities of New York, Brooklyn, and Adjacent Places (New York, 1859), p. 22.

[6]New York City, Almshouse (hereinafter referred to as N.Y.C., Almshouse), Third Annual Report of the Board of Governors of the Almshouse, New-York, for the Year 1851 (New York, 1851), pp. 2, 4, 7, 8, 127-129; N.Y.C., Almshouse, Fourth Annual Report of the Governors of the Almshouse,

the Governors of the Alms-House reported that pressure from the unemployed--many of these chronically unemployed--was so great that they had had to reconsider their entire program of outdoor relief.[7] And for each person resorting to public charity, contemporaries observed, many more received aid from private individuals and groups. City missions, medical dispensaries, and orphanages all grew in numbers and scale of work.

The newly arrived immigrant, the Negro, and what contemporaries called the vicious poor--we, with a slight change in tone, the hard-core poor--were the most alarmingly visible of New York's slum-dwellers. But they were not alone; many of the regularly employed and native-born were forced to live in circumstances not terribly different. Wage and employment structures in many of the city's trades were changing drastically. By the 1850's, such traditional New York industries as clothing, shoe-making, piano and furniture manufacturing were undergoing consolidation and mechanization; in many cases this brought deterioration in working

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New-York, for the Year 1852 (New York, 1853), pp. xiii, xiv, 1-6, 109-112; N.Y.C., Almshouse, Fifth Annual Report of the Governors of the Almshouse, New-York, for the Year 1853 (New York, 1854), pp. 1-6, 101-104. It is difficult to say whether in terms of absolute proportions the number of the rich and poor had actually changed. It was clear, however, that New Yorkers felt that the extremes of wealth and poverty had become more marked.

[7]N.Y.C., Almshouse, Seventh Annual Report of the Board of Governors of the Almshouse, New-York, for the Year 1855 (New York, 1856), pp. 190, 189-194.

conditions. While some skilled artisans rose to become contractors or manufacturers, the majority sank to the level of "mechanics" or "laborers." Such workers toiled long hours for wages which seemed increasingly inadequate; a fifteen- to eighteen-hour day was commonplace in work done at home. Factory hands worked ten to eleven hours a day, and often brought work home to be finished. As the 1850's progressed, an increasing proportion of workers found their way into factories. In 1855, Brooks Brothers employed three hundred male operatives in its clothing factory, Light, Newton, and Bradbury employed 164 men at cabinet-making. One hundred and ten men worked at the A. H. Gale company producing an average of 650 pianos a year during the 1850's. Iron and metal foundries and the ship-building firms at Corlear's Hook had always employed large numbers of men.[8] By the 1850's, public health advocates agreed in condemning the unhealthy and dangerous conditions which prevailed in many of these enterprises.[9]

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[8]For descriptions of working conditions in various of New York's industries, see: Jesse Eliphalet Pope, The Clothing Industry in New York, University of Missouri Studies, I (Columbia, Mo., 1903), 12-44; Egal Feldman, Fit for Men: A Study of New York's Clothing Trade (Washington, D.C., 1960), especially Chaps. VIII and IX; [James Dawson Burn], Three Years Among the Working-classes in the United States during the War (London, 1865), pp. 178-189; John R. Commons, "American Shoemakers 1648-1895. A Sketch of Industrial Evolution," Quarterly Journal of Economics, XXIV, No. 1 (November, 1909), 72; Ernst, Immigrant, pp. 81-82, 249, 252.

[9]See, for example, testimony of Dr. Alexander H. Stevens in New York State Senate, Report of the Select Committee Investigating the Health Department of the City of New York, Senate Document No. 49 (Albany, 1859), p. 86.

Workers often preferred doing piece work at home to the regimentation of the ill-ventilated and poorly constructed factories. And indeed in a number of New York's industries--cigar-making and clothing especially--most production took place in the operatives' homes. German and Jewish families, Irish and native-born women, for example, sewed virtually all the ready-made clothing produced in the city in their own tenement apartments. "Each family," a tailor wrote of the industry as he remembered it during the 1860's and '70's, "employed from one to two hands, all living and working in the same rooms. There was no water in the building and toilets were situated in the back yard." Conditions two decades earlier were, if anything, worse. Gas lighting was rare and apartments consisted usually of one, or at most two, rooms. There was of course no indoor plumbing.[10]

These were the conditions which city missionaries and dispensary physicians met in their daily rounds; they could hardly view them with equanimity.

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Growth had brought New York City social problems of a dimension previously unknown. Both older residents and recent arrivals from rural areas found the city a bewildering and dismaying place. Increasingly with the 1840's and 1850's, articulate New Yorkers began to complain of the rising costs

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[10]Quoted in Ernst, Immigrant, p. 77.

of government, of higher taxes, of political corruption and incompetence. Franchises for street railroads were openly bought and sold; policeman's jobs were an accepted medium of political exchange. The city's only health officer was a political appointee, responsible for selecting the city's garbage collectors and street cleaners (and thus the source each year of thousands of dollars in fees and wages). Until the mid-1850's, New York possessed no regular police or fire department, no independent auditor or comptroller.[11] Most public services--relief, medical aid, even education--had necessarily to be supplemented by private charities. None of these things had in essence changed since the 1820's and 1830's; but now the city's overwhelming needs peremptorily demanded a more active and far-reaching city government. The 1840's and 1850's witnessed, accordingly, the rise of reform and taxpayers' parties, all dedicated ostensibly to the goal of ridding the municipal government of corruption, pauperism--and the block voting of uninformed immigrants.[12]

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[11]Henry E. Davies, A Compilation of the Laws of the State of New York, Relating particularly to the City of New York. Prepared at the Request of the Common Council and Published under their Direction (New York, 1855), Chap. 217, pp. 410-415; Eli Leavitt, Annual Report of the City Inspector of the Number of Deaths and Interments in the City of New York during the Year 1844 (New York, 1845), pp. 675-676; N.Y.S. Senate, Report . . . Health Department, pp. 8-10; Limpus, Fire Department, pp. 180-238; J/ames/ F. Richmond, New York and its Institutions, 1609-1872 (New York, 1872), pp. 180-190; New York City Board of Aldermen, Proceedings of the Board of Aldermen, May 1831-1936 (339 vols.; New York, 1835-1937), xxviii, 24-29; Haswell, Reminiscences, p. 488; New York Tribune, June 4, 1853; New York Herald, February 21, 1858; New York Times, January 6, 1853.

[12]See, for example, the New York Herald's call for a "Tax Payers' Party," June 3, 1858. Cf. New York Independent,

The city's rapidly increasing disease and mortality rates were at least as frightening to most respectable New Yorkers as its Irish aldermen. By 1856, one New Yorker in twenty-nine died each year, a rate nearly double that of London. This was in alarming contrast to the comparatively bucolic years at the beginning of the century when but one New Yorker in forty-seven died annually. "Death is making an alarming inroad upon /our/ population," the State Legislature's Select Committee appointed to investigate New York's Health department reported in 1859. "The average yearly mortality is far beyond its due proportion. There are annually cut off from it by disease and death, enough human beings to people a city, and enough human labor to sustain it."[13]

Most disturbingly, this unprecedented mortality rate could be traced directly to increases in infant and stillborn deaths. In 1850, there had been 10,567 infant deaths

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January 24, 1852; New York Tribune, July 28, 1852; New York Evening Post, September 24, 1852, and March 7, 1853.

[13]N.Y.S. Senate, Report . . . Health Department, pp. 6, 60. For lengthy medical testimony concerning the city's health, see body of the report, passim. See also John H. Griscom, Annual Report of the Interments in the City and County of New-York, for the Year 1842 with Remarks thereon, and a Brief View of the Sanitary Condition of the City (New York, 1843); Griscom, The Sanitary Condition of the Laboring Population of New York with Suggestions for its Improvement (New York, 1845); Council of Hygiene and Public Health of the Citizen's Association, "Introductory Statement by the Council of the Citizen's Association," Citizens' Association of New York, Report of the Council of Hygiene and Public Health of the Citizens' Association of New York upon the Sanitary Condition of the City (New York, 1865), pp. vii-xviii.

to 6,411 adult deaths. Ten years later, the City Inspector reported that more than one-half of New York's immigrant children under five died each year (two and two-thirds of those under five and three and one-half in every five among those under two).[14] It is hardly surprising that the New York Legislature should have launched a series of investigations of the city's health conditions in the 1850's.[15]

The obvious reason for this dismaying increase in disease incidence, most thoughtful New Yorkers assumed, was the filth in which so many of their fellow Manhattanites lived. (Contemporary medical thought, it should be recalled, tended to explain the etiology of most infectious diseases in terms of miasmata arising from decaying organic matter.) New York had always been a filthy city. But population growth and congestion harshly exacerbated conditions already bad in 1810 and 1820. Rear as well as front lots were being filled, tenements were growing upward, their cellars and

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[14]A. W. White, Annual Report . . . 1850, pp. 443-448; Daniel E. Delavan, Annual Report of the City Inspector of the City of New York for the Year Ending December 31, 1860 (New York, 1861), p. 13. For figures on comparative rates of infant mortality, see: L. Emmett Holt, "Infant Mortality and its Reduction, especially in New York City," Journal of the American Medical Association, LIV (1910), 682-690; W. F. Thoms, "Health in country and cities. Illustrated by tables of the death-rates, sickness-rates, etc.," Transactions of the American Medical Association, XVII (1866), 431-434.

[15]In addition to the Senate Select Committee of 1858-1859, the New York State Assembly in 1855-1856 had appointed a Special Committee to study tenements in New York and Brooklyn. New York State Assembly, "Report of the Special Committee on Tenement Houses in New York and Brooklyn," Documents of the Assembly of the State of New-York . . . 79th Session, 1856 (Albany, 1856), Vol. V, No. 199.

garrets crowded. The as yet unsolved problems of garbage collection, street cleaning, and the removal of human wastes grew proportionately. Yet the Common Council had made little change in its long-criticized methods of sanitation. Garbage collection contracts remained, for example, political plums, and few of the recipients felt called upon to actually perform their specified duties. Even the well-to-do complained that their garbage remained uncollected for weeks and, when removed, was simply dumped on the corporation piers to rot. Tenement districts posed a particular problem. Huge quantities of garbage accumulated, far in excess of the capacity of the few bins supplied by speculative landlords.[16] Even more alarming was the problem of human waste disposal. New York possessed only an incomplete and not very efficient sewer system. Each night, accordingly, carts filled with "nightsoil" passed through the city streets, finally dumping their reeking contents on the corporation piers. Citizens learned their routes and carefully closed their windows on nights when the carts were scheduled to pass.[17]

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[16]Thomas K. Downing, Annual Report of the City Inspector of the City of New York for the Year 1856 (New York, 1857), p. 197; New York Independent, II (January 10, 1850), 6; Griscom, Annual Report . . . 1842, pp. 188-197.

[17]Griscom, Annual Report . . . 1842, p. 198; A. W. White, Annual Report of the City Inspector of the Number of Deaths and Interments in the City of New York During the Year 1849 (New York, 1850), p. 510; Delavan, Annual Report . . . 1860, pp. 27-29; George W. Morton, Annual Report of the City Inspector of the City of New York for the Year ending December 31, 1857 (New York, 1858), pp. 192-194; New York Association for Improving the Condition of the Poor, First Report of a

But for New York's workingmen and their families, these were conditions of life, not simply causes for informed concern. They had to live in the city's tenements. Landlords ordinarily provided a few privies along the side of the building, or in its basement of back yard. The odor and filth surrounding them was almost indescribable. Missionary visitors as well as dispensary physicians and other public health advocates were horrified to find back yards where children played and mothers hung up wash, coated with human excreta and swarming with flies. By the late 1850's and 1860's, the newer tenements were linked with the city's sewer system. But the pipes used were for the most part far too small. Clogging and backing up resulted--and their last condition, in true Biblical fashion, was worse than their first.[18] To these monumental sources of filth, New Yorkers added that created in raising over three thousand pigs commercially--and many more informally--in operating a score of slaughter houses within the city limits, and in permitting private individuals to collect street manure, cart it to areas adjacent to the wharves and there allow it to "age."[19]

Committee on the Sanitary Condition of the Laboring Classes in the City of New-York, with Remedial Suggestions (New York, 1853), pp. 8-9, 11-12.

[18]Delavan, Annual Report . . . 1860, p. 53; Downing, Annual Report . . . 1856, p. 197; N.Y.S. Senate, Report . . . Health Department, p. 74; N.Y.S. Assembly, "Report, Tenement Houses," passim.

[19]John H. Griscom, in both his city inspector's Annual Report . . . 1842 and in his Sanitary Condition of the Laboring Population, described these practices in great detail. Virtually every city inspector's report for the 1850's and 1860's pointed to their continued existence.

Disease, filth, and odor were only a few of the problems created by slum life. Perhaps the city's most pressing dilemma were the hordes of rootless children the tenements bred. Underfed, uneducated, not infrequently illegitimate, they genuinely alarmed respectable New Yorkers; these waifs would be citizens and voters in the not-too-distant future. In 1850, New York's police commissioner shocked the city by reporting that there were almost three thousand vagrant children in New York. The majority were girls, and these, he claimed, survived largely by practicing some of the more degraded forms of prostitution. Fifteen years later the socially aware Advocate and Family Guardian reported that 125,000 children lived in the city, "unreached and uncared for, as far as moral and religious training is concerned. Fifty thousand of these are vagrants, roaming the streets and docks by day and by night."[20] A number of charitable organizations were established in the 1850's, with the specific goal of providing homes for these children, and that decade, the New York Association for Improving the Condition of the Poor in conjunction with a number of the other city missions succeeded in having the state legislature pass a stringent truancy and vagrancy law.[21]

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[20]New York Independent, II (January 24, 1850), 13, and (February 7, 1850), 22; Advocate and Family Guardian, XXXII (January 16, 1866), 20-21; see, as well, McCabe, Secrets, pp. 189-192, and Browne, Great Metropolis, pp. 274-275, 424-433, for contemporary descriptions and opinions.

[21]Infra, Chaps. VIII, IX, and X. The Association will hereinafter be referred to as A.I.C.P.

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Filth, crime, disease, and vagrancy; these were among the more prominent of the problems facing a growing metropolis. Older New Yorkers, however, and many newer ones recently come from the country tended to foreshorten and explain the new city's disorganization in images which allowed them to simplify and understand.

Two images served to perform this function for many articulate New Yorkers; these were the immigrant and the tenement. The tenement was an unnatural forcing-ground for sickness and immorality while it was the immigrant who brought disease, whose children ran ragged and larcenous through the city's streets, who voted corrupt aldermen into office, who inhabited the city's filthy and deteriorating slum buildings.

In a real sense, it might be argued, these images, at once picture and rationalization, of slum conditions had not really changed since the 1820's and 1830's. Despite the tremendous increase in the scale of these problems, New Yorkers tended still to emphasize the individualistic and the moralistic in their views of poverty in their city. The immigrant, for example, had played a central role in both periods in middle-class explanations of New York's social disorganization. Temperance too still played a significant role in the social thinking of articulate New Yorkers. But by the 1850's, the tenement had clearly

eclipsed temperance in the minds of many Americans concerned with the quality of urban life. And this change is a highly significant one. For this acceptance of the tenement itself as a social problem implies a growing knowledge of living conditions, a growing commitment to environmental attitudes and explanations. And in the minds of many New Yorkers as well a growing commitment to pragmatic and melioristic reform.

New Yorkers' anxieties in regard to the immigrant and the tenement cannot simply be dismissed as a self-serving oversimplification of a complex and threatening situation; both were very real problems. Over 60,000 passengers arrived at the port of New York in 1840--only 4,000 at Philadelphia and 5,000 at Boston. Many others destined for New York landed in Brooklyn and New Jersey. By the decade's end the number of arrivals had grown appreciably. In May of 1849, 32,700 aliens landed in New York City, in June another 33,000. The following year 212,796 arrived--117,000 from Ireland, 45,535 from Germany, and 35,000 from England and Scotland.[22] Most continued on to farms and villages inland. Each year, however, an appreciable number remained in the city. By 1849, the number and need of these new arrivals had become

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[22]Valentine, Manual of the Corporation of the City of New York for the Year 1849 (New York, 1849), p. 311; Griscom, Annual Report . . . 1842, p. 157; New York City Chamber of Commerce, Report on Emigration by a Special Committee of the Chamber of Commerce, January 5, 1865, cited Stokes, Iconography, V, 1823; Foster, New York in Slices, p. 84.

New York's single most discordant social reality. It was in this period, for example, that the heretofore uninterested state legislature began to consider the problem specifically, passing laws to protect these new arrivals from exploitation by the city's criminal and marginal businesses and adopting Castle Garden for use as a safer and more orderly point of entry.[23]

Contrary to the impression held by many contemporaries, not all of these immigrants sank into the morass of indigence or of the day laborer's life; by the 1850's even the Irish community had its fledgling social institutions--schools, an orphanage, a ladies' seminary and college, even a militia regiment. Irishmen had already begun to find careers in politics and business.[24] Yet, of course, many immigrants did not prosper. Of 2,355 almshouse admissions in 1850, 1,810 were foreign-born and 1,464 of these Irish. Similar ratios held good for the city's other eleemosynary institutions; of 3,728 admissions at Bellevue in 1850, 2,596 reported Ireland as their birthplace; only 647 were

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[23]New York State Assembly, Report of the Select Committee Appointed to Investigate Frauds upon Emigrant Passengers Arriving in this State, Assembly Document No. 46 (Albany, 1847); New York State, Laws of the State of New-York Passed by the Seventy-second Session of the Legislature (Troy, New York, 1848).

[24]Lossing, New York City, II, 701; New York Evening Post, May 17, 1847, September 6, 1847, and February 26, 1851. See, passim, Freeman's Journal, the official paper of the New York archdiocese, but especially October 10, 1846, April 24, 1847, May 14, 1859; Ernst, Immigrant, pp. 84-98, 135-149.

native-born.[25] The Independent complained the same year the "one principal cause of such an amount of juvenile depravity in New York is the great influx of foreigners, many of whom are in the lowest stages of poverty."[26] Anti-immigrant feeling maintained itself at a high pitch throughout the decade. Such xenophobic sentiments lay, of course, behind much New York interest in reform and third party alternatives during the 1850's.[27]

Anti-catholicism was an integral component of this chronic nativism; it is, indeed, difficult to disentangle the two. Increasing numbers of Irish and Germans, their growing political power, the contrasts between their life styles and those prescribed by American protestantism--all intensified traditional and ingrained dislike of Catholics and Catholicism.[28] "The Catholic religion was a kind of embodied spirit of evil," a Catholic World editorial of 1860 explained bitterly, "and her ministers had to vindicate their title to the rank of men and Christians. Religion, morality, liberty, happiness would be swept from the country if they

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[25]N.Y.C., Almshouse, Second Annual Report of the Governors of the Almshouse, New-York, for the Year 1850 (New York, 1851), pp. 21-30, 117-120, 125, 129.

[26]New York Independent, II (January 24, 1850), 14.

[27]John Higham, Strangers in the Land, Patterns of American Nativism, 1860-1925 (New Brunswick, 1955), Chap. 1.

[28]For two of an innumerable number of examples, see editorials in the Christian Times, February 1, 1866, and The Nation, I (November 20, 1865), 691-692.

were not exterminated!"[29] These words were not simply hyperbole; to "evangelical" Protestants it was clear that Catholicism was no real religion. Throughout the 1850's and 1860's, the desire to socialize these masses of Catholic immigrants was a significant and explicit theme in the city mission movement.

The immigrant lived in the tenement. And the realities of tenement life mocked the formally expressed ethics and morals of a Christian society. It threatened that society as well; disease, crime, and vice all seemed to proliferate in crowded tenement apartments.

In its pioneering housing code of 1867, New York State defined a tenement as any building containing more than three families, living and cooking separately, and having access to common stairs and halls. That year, it was later estimated, New York City contained 15,000 such structures.[30] Nine years earlier, Samuel B. Halliday, city missionary and dedicated public health advocate, asserted that half a million New Yorkers--over half the city's population--lived in tenements. If dwellings housing at least three families were thus defined, then three-quarters of the city's inhabitants lived in tenements. Halliday's alarm was apparent.

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[29] Catholic World, III (1866), 389.

[30] Lawrence Veiller, "Tenement House Reform in New York City, 1834-1900," in The Tenement House Problem, ed. by Robert W. DeForest and Lawrence Veiller (2 vols.; New York, 1903), I, 69-119.

In the first ward, for example, close to the docks where the bulk of the city's immigrants landed, 2,341 of 2,814 families lived in tenements. The ward averaged fifteen families per building, a dismayingly large number given the sanitary and engineering abilities of New York's construction firms in the 1850's (and the assumption by most respectable Americans that home-owning was the normal and indeed moral pattern of family life, urban as well as rural). The tenth ward--in what is now known as the Lower East Side--averaged seventeen families per building.[31]

The pattern of tenement dwelling which we saw just beginning to develop in the 1830's had, by the 1850's and 1860's, reached a stable and characteristic form. Two quite different kinds of tenements characterized New York's slums:: those which concerned contemporaries termed the "reconstructed tenant house" and those called "especially constructed tenements." The reconstructed tenant house was a natural and unplanned consequence of changing residence patterns and New York's spiralling real estate prices. As the century progressed and the wealthy moved away from homes in the older business streets, their comfortable houses were divided and divided again. At first only a few families might occupy the house, and the building would be maintained in good repair. But population pressure and land values continued to rise; the property had to produce more and more income. It

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[31]Halliday, Lost and Found, pp. 190-195.

was either torn down to make room for larger commercial buildings or converted into a tenement housing perhaps a dozen families--necessarily from among the poor. (Normally such tenement rooms were rented by the week, testimony to the insecure economic status of the expected tenants.)[32]

Having begun life as one-family dwellings--in a generation not yet given to pretentious scale in domestic life--these reconstructed tenements were ordinarily rather small. They averaged--it was estimated--eighteen by thirty feet and were ordinarily three to four stories in height, plus a cellar. Since they were ultimately to be replaced by new commercial buildings, little was spent on either remodeling or upkeep. In the third ward, indeed, just behind Trinity Church, one such building contained seventy tenants, all Irish. There was no plaster on the walls; its stairs and roof were rotten with decay. In the fifth ward, near once fashionable St. John's Park, state officials found one such tenement in a state of almost total dilapidation, the rear "apparently abandoned to general filth and excrements." Yet twenty tenants still lived there. And such buildings were not atypical; investigators found no difficulty in unearthing even more crowded and filthy examples of the reconstructed tenement.[33]

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[32]N.Y.S. Assembly, "Report . . . Tenement Houses," pp. 10-12.

[33]Ibid., pp. 16-22.

The second type of tenement common in mid-nineteenth-century New York was especially constructed to house large numbers of the poor. These had normally two or four apartments on each floor (depending on the building's width). The front room of the apartment opened on either the street or a back court; the inner bedroom was always dark and windowless. A twin building was often constructed at the rear of the first tenement. Reached through a narrow alley from the street, it was usually less than ten feet from the rear of the front building. Especially in the lower, commercial wards, where street frontage commanded high business rates, reformers frequently found rear lots filled with such newly constructed tenements. Filthy, foul-smelling, they were reached through a labyrinth of alleys or, ironically, glimpsed from the rear window of an elegant shop or hotel.[34]

Contemporaries agreed that the universal practice of letting cellar rooms was the most unhealthy aspect of New York's tenement problem. Such half-finished basements provided neither light nor adequate ventilation; their dampness encouraged not only rheumatism and respiratory disease, but--given the city's haphazard sanitary arrangements--threatened occupants as well with typhoid, dysentery, and cholera. In damp weather, earthen and wooden walls would be beaded with

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[34] Ibid., pp. 24-28; N.Y.S. Senate, Report . . . Health Department, pp. 30-31; Halliday, Lost and Found, pp. 196-198; A.I.C.P., First Report . . . Sanitary Condition, pp. 8-11; Cyrus Ramsay, Annual Report of the City Inspector of the City of New York for the Year 1864 (New York, 1865), pp. 147-148.

drops of moisture seeping from drains, sewers, and privies. In 1842 the City Inspector complained that at least 1,459 cellars in New York were occupied, serving as homes for nearly seven thousand families. "Into some water is continually flowing from roofs and yards, and the small rooms are so crowded as to leave scarcely room to turn." Some had literally to be bailed out after each rain.[35]

New Yorkers' awareness of such conditions had of course come gradually. Since the War of 1812, a growing handful of the respectable had begun to learn at first hand of the misery in which so many of their fellow citizens existed. City missionaries, dispensary physicians, teachers in the city's public schools and Sunday school volunteers, the more conscientious occupants of the city inspector's office--all had visited the homes of the poor. As early as 1834, City Inspector Garrett Forbes had deplored the crowding and filth of the city's slums. Two years before, in 1832, New Yorkers terrified by an impending cholera epidemic had been dismayed by similar conditions. A decade later, City Inspector and public health reformer John H. Griscom had appended a lengthy description of such disease-breeding conditions to his City Inspector's annual report of vital statistics. The annual reports of New York City Tract Society, of the Protestant Episcopal City Mission Society, the Association for Improving

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[35]Griscom, Annual Report . . . 1842, pp. 156, 162-165. See, as well, his comments in Sanitary Condition of the Laboring Population, pp. 8-10. Cf. N.Y.S. Senate, Report . . . Health Department, p. 115.

the Condition of the Poor, and of the medical dispensaries referred frequently to the numbers of the poor and to their crowded and unhealthy living arrangements.

But it was not until the 1850's that New Yorkers generally awoke to the existence of such conditions. The cholera epidemics of 1849 and 1854, the depressions of 1855 and 1857, forced them to realize that large numbers of the poor lived in crowded, unhealthy slums, carefully segregated from the comfortable and respectable.[36] In 1849, for example, immediately following a severe cholera epidemic, the city inspector again pointed to the relation of cholera to the unsanitary, crowded tenements of the poor.[37] The following year, the newly formed American Medical Association, acting largely in response to the cholera epidemic of 1849, sponsored a study of urban disease incidence, a report widely commented upon in the city's press.[38] In 1850, as well, the

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[36]Evidence of this growing interest in and awareness of slum conditions can be found, for instance, in the increasing space devoted to discussions of slum conditions in the city inspector's reports, in the space given to slum conditions in the annual reports of the city missions, and in such newspapers as the New York Evening Post and the New York Independent, and finally in the number of physicians who volunteered to testify before the state investigatory committees. By the 1860's Sanitary Association meetings to discuss the health problems of American cities had become an annual event.

[37]White, Annual Report . . . 1849, pp. 505-506.

[38]American Medical Association, First Report of the Committee on Public Hygiene. Read at the Annual Meeting held in Boston, May, 1849. With an Appendix Containing Sketches of the Sanitary Condition of the Cities of Concord, Portland, New York, Philadelphia, Boston, Lowell, Baltimore, Charleston, New Orleans, Louisville and Cincinnati (Philadelphia, 1849).

liberal Protestant Independent carried articles and editorials on such varied topics connected with poverty and slums as juvenile vagrancy, cellar apartments, and the effect of tenement life on the public health.[39] Just three years later, the New York Association for Improving the Condition of the Poor, one of the city's newest and most active charities, issued a lengthy census and discussion of tenement houses and circulated plans for model tenements among builders and capitalists. Its activities were widely publicized.[40] By 1856, in the wake of one of New York's most severe depressions (a depression which, contemporaries felt, forced many of the respectable lower middle-class into tenement apartments), public protest and awareness were sufficient to persuade the state legislature to appoint a select committee to examine tenement houses in New York and Brooklyn. (The committee reported with some surprise that they had found a large body of New Yorkers already informed about tenement problems and capable of assisting them in their investigation;[41] a growing number of reports and descriptions, the select committee discovered, had already forced a knowledge of the new slums and their inhabitants upon thoughtful New Yorkers.) No sooner

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[39]See, for example, New York Independent, II (January 17, 1850), 10, (January 24, 1850), 14, (February 7, 1850), 22, and (May 9, 1850), 76.

[40]A.I.C.P., First Report . . . Sanitary Condition.

[41]N.Y.S. Assembly, "Report . . . Tenement Houses," pp. 3, 10.

had the legislative committee issued their report in 1857 than the second sharp depression of the decade struck New York. Again the city's workingmen, clerks and artisans were pressed to the wall. In 1859, the state legislature again appointed a special committee to survey the extent of the city's poverty, tenements, and disease. And again the press actively publicized their work.[42]

But the draft riots of 1863, more than any other single event, forced the respectable, the educated, and the articulate to recognize that they lived surrounded by great pockets of disease, misery, crime and illiteracy--that their city had changed radically since the beginning of the century. New York now resembled a major European city more closely than it did the simpler community of 1810 or 1820. The draft riots proved the immediate stimulus to the formation of a citizen's committee to study poverty and tenement conditions in New York, and ultimately to the publication of an influential report on the public health. In combination with a threatened cholera epidemic in 1866, they led to the passage of New York's first major piece of welfare legislation, the Metropolitan Board of Health Act of 1866. The Tenement House Code--the first such code adopted for any United States city--was enacted into law the following year (1867).[43]

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[42]N.Y.S. Senate, Report . . . Health Department.

[43]The Citizens Association, the lobbying group most directly responsible for the reform in the city's health department, was founded in the months immediately following

The concern which led to the passage of such social legislation was, as we have indicated, not simply altruistic. In an age when moralism permeated every sphere of thought and few barriers existed between the intellectual realms of the physiological, the moral, and the social, it was easy for New Yorkers to see the tenement as all-corrupting source of the city's problems. "The physical and moral," an earnest Independent editorialist explained in 1850, "are closely allied. The habit of living in squalor and filth engenders vice and vice, on the other hand, finds a congenial home in the midst of physical impurities."[44] Reformers stressed the danger of licentiousness and prostitution developing in an environment where whole families, even boarders, slept in one room. (Such unnatural and unhealthful proximity was a medical as well as moral problem; the etiology of the venereal diseases was only a more explicit example of a more general relationship.) With children raised in close proximity to alcoholics and criminals, teachers and city missionaries asked, how could they long remain virtuous?[45]

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the Draft Riots. For the effect of these riots on respectable opinion, and especially on stimulating public health reform, see: Gert H. Brieger, "Sanitary Reform in New York City: Stephen Smith and the Passage of the Metropolitan Health Bill," Bulletin of the History of Medicine, XL (September-October, 1966), 407-429; Stephen Smith, "Riots and their Prevention," Doctor in Medicine, and other Papers on Professional Subjects (New York, 1872), pp. 188-195; Rosenberg, Cholera Years, pp. 187, 231.

[44]Independent (January 24, 1850), p. 14.

[45]See, for example, Smith, "Riots and their Prevention," p. 192; N.Y.S. Senate, Report . . . Health Department, p. 13;

City missionaries, physicians, and public officials spent a good deal of effort in the 1850's explaining to genteel Americans the ways in which slum life demoralized the poor, perpetuating its own ethos of immorality and hopelessness. Only the strongest of moral constitutions might hope to withstand the spiritual miasma of the tenements. High rents or temporary unemployment not infrequently forced families previously virtuous and hard-working into slum apartments. Here they struggled without a water supply, with primitive sanitary facilities, to maintain a clean, respectable home. Gradually, however, surrounded by sickness, living in such debilitating circumstances, they fell ill.[46] "Health failing them," the legislature's Select Committee on Tenement Houses reported, "want will follow; and then must come crowding rapidly upon them, neglect of home, neglect of children, uncleanliness, drunkenness and crime. This is no fancy sketch. . . . It is a stern reality, enacted every day in the midst of luxury and wealth . . . ."[47] Some

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Griscom, Annual Report . . . 1842, p. 162; Delavan, Annual Report . . . 1860, pp. 13, 24-25.

[46]Griscom, Annual Report . . . 1842, pp. 160-161, 175-181; N.Y.S. Assembly, "Report . . . Tenement Houses," pp. 3-4, 8, 47, 52-53; Halliday, Lost and Found, pp. 27-31, 190, 198-199; Downing, Annual Report . . . 1856, p. 45; Delavan, Annual Report of the City Inspector for the Year 1859 (New York, 1860), p. 16; Delavan, Annual Report . . . 1860, p. 25; Delavan, Annual Report of the City Inspector for the Year 1863 (New York, 1864), pp. 7-8. See also Veiller, "Tenement House Reform," p. 71.

[47]N.Y.S. Assembly, "Report . . . Tenement Houses," p. 4.

seven years later a citizens' group gave dramatic emphasis to this report. Visiting a drunken mother living in a dismal rear court, the sanitary officer sympathetically asked why she drank. She replied simply, "If you lived in this place you would ask for whiskey instead of milk."[48]

The existence of such large moral lesions in the social body led many Americans to denounce the immigrant as a bearer of Europe's social ills to America's idyllic shores. Others in the trying years before the Civil War began to fear for the continued viability of their free institutions; could popular democracy survive in the conditions made by the new city? The majority chose, however, not to reject either the city or the immigrant. While retaining a certain disdain for the alien poor, and a growing concern for the shape being assumed by their developing metropolis, New Yorkers still cast about for individualistic and moral factors with which to explain and order these new realities.

Most of these were traditional--drink, carelessness, original sin; but new emphases were coming into prominence. A new moral scapegoat had been found, for example, in the slum landlord. Often a slum resident himself, the tenant house entrepreneur was a marginal figure economically, not infrequently the operator of a saloon or brothel in the tenement's basement. In origin he was frequently an immigrant himself, or a first-generation American; rarely was he a

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[48]New York State, Metropolitan Board of Health, First Annual Report, 1866 (Albany, 1866), p. 135.

member of the Protestant establishment that owned so great a proportion of the city's real estate. By focussing criticism upon this petty exploiter of his fellows, respectable and conservative New Yorkers were able to exonerate society generally from responsibility for the slum and at the same time transpose a widespread social blight into individual and hence comprehensible and remediable terms. City missionaries endorsed and documented the indictments of the city's slum landlords drawn up by mid-century public health advocates. "If they can get tenants into their buildings and get their pay, very little do they care whether the occupants live or die, if they only pay the rent for the time being."[49]

In the minds of many genuinely charitable New Yorkers, moreover, the immorality of the poor themselves was the moral counterpart of the landlord's greed in degrading the housing in which they lived. Even those New Yorkers most sympathetic

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[49]Dr. Simon Bachelder, testimony, N.Y.S. Senate, Report . . . Health Department, p. 66; cf. extended testimony before the Select Committee to study tenement houses, especially N.Y.S. Assembly, "Report . . . Tenement Houses," pp. 10-12, 18-19. Fifteen years earlier the by no means radical Lydia Maria Child commented bitterly upon the exploitation of New York's poor by the slum landlords, a theme emphasized by most city missions during the 1850's and 1860's. Child, Letters, p. 20; infra, Chaps. VIII and X. For an insightful modern study of this pattern of transferring blame for a general pattern of slum housing and low economic standards from the economy generally to the individual landholder, see Lawrence Friedman, Government and Public Housing, A Century of Frustration (in press). Closely related to their castigation of the slum landlord was the reformers' demands for model tenements, which they believed honest and respectable capitalists could construct and receive a 6 per cent profit from. The city missions led the fight for such model tenements. Infra, Chap. X.

to their plight tended to regard the city's poor as ignorant, stupid, and illiterate. They could not comprehend the need for cleanliness. They were unable to protect themselves from the tenement landlord, to find the strength and purpose to escape the city altogether--clearly the only lasting remedy for the problems of most tenement-dwellers. These moral dependents required the paternalistic attentions not only of private charity, but of the state as well. It was such views which sanctioned, even demanded the social legislation to be found in the act establishing the Metropolitan Board of Health and the Tenement House Code of 1867.[50]

.3.

In the recognition of this new urban reality, the city missions had played an important role. Schemes for the improving of the public health and social welfare continued in this period to draw upon the knowledge and motivation of the city missionaries and their dedicated supporters. As the millennial hopes of the 1830's faded, the missions too had begun to change, to assume new--more limited and more

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[50]For examples of this type of argument, see: Griscom, Annual Report . . . 1842, pp. 175-180; A.I.C.P., First Report . . . Sanitary Condition, p. 5; Thomas K. Downing, Annual Report of the City Inspector of the Number of Deaths and Interments in the City of New York during the Year 1852 (New York, 1853), pp. 287-288; Delavan, Annual Report . . . 1860, pp. 26-27; N.Y.S. Assembly, "Report . . . Tenement Houses," pp. 8, 31-32, 45-46, 52-53. Virtually every doctor testifying before the Senate Select Committee in 1859 demanded rigid tenant house legislation for these reasons. N.Y.S. Senate, Report . . . Health Department, pp. 5-6, 11, 13, 24-73, 85, 86-138.

pragmatic--forms. They found themselves casually and inevitably casting about for new tactics with which to achieve a secular salvation for at least some of their fellow New Yorkers.

CHAPTER VIII

America changed drastically in the years between the panic of 1837 and the end of the Civil War; no area demonstrated these changes more emphatically than New York City.

New York's city missions changed too; they moved gradually away from the pietism and the generously millennial goals which had marked their earlier years. Their efforts steadily narrowed in scope. From being the benign harbinger of Christ's second coming to all New Yorkers, the City Tract Society became church and almoner of the city's desperately poor, operating lodging halls for vagrant men and sponsoring tenement house reform; the American Female Guardian Society, forsaking its grand expectation of purifying the morals of all Americans, opened an orphanage and an employment agency for needy women. New city missions came into being, founded exclusively to serve the temporal and spiritual needs of New York's poor.

In part, these changes reflected a general cooling of religious enthusiasm, a movement away from the revivalistic immediatism of the 1830's toward a more decorous, less emotional faith. By the 1850's, respectable New Yorkers no longer welcomed the missionary attentions of strangers who

knocked promiscuously at their doors. New York's slum population, on the other hand, had grown in size, increasingly isolated from middle-class society and the socializing influence of established religious institutions. (That many among the city's poor were foreign-born Roman Catholics only intensified the problem.) By mid-century, pious New Yorkers had come to assume that an ominous religious void existed in their city's tenement districts; New York's churches had somehow to act upon this "fermenting mass," to reach the poor--and most importantly the children of the poor--if the city's social and religious patterns were to remain stable. With increasing clarity during the 1850's and 1860's city mission workers and officers came to see this task as the principal function of their institution. Thus they relinquished their original goal of saving all souls, wherever found, for the limited, socially oriented one of converting--and reforming--the urban poor.

Once city mission workers began to define their missionary field in socio-economic rather than in millennial terms, they became increasingly engrossed in the temporal needs of the slum dweller. Consciously, of course, throughout most of the 1850's, the satisfaction of material needs still remained primarily a method of achieving the transcendent goal of eternal salvation. But methods tend to become ends, and by the late 1850's, city missionaries had become deeply involved in movements for the improvement of health conditions, appearing, for example, as witnesses

before committees investigating health and housing conditions in New York. By the mid-1860's, city missions had organized employment agencies, day nurseries, summer camps, model tenements, and manual training schools.

But such changes imply an interpretive dilemma: what, in terms of the motivation for these activities, were the relative roles played by a heritage of pietistic commitment and that played by a more mundane desire for social control? Tract and Bible distributors, moral reform advocates and Sunday school organizers had--even in the millennial 1830's--never doubted that good work habits and social propriety accompanied conversion. Yet their primary object was clearly eternal salvation, not the ordering and control of behavior. As the several missions narrowed their field of concern to the poor alone, however, the social content of their labors became inevitably more prominent. In part, of course, this was simply a visceral response to the very alienism of the new slum dwellers; in part it was an inevitable artifact of the interpersonal relationships implied by continued visiting among the desperately poor. By the mid-1860's, social order, the industry and frugality of the laboring classes, the protection of private property had all become significant and unmistakable themes in the city mission effort.

Thus, by the 1860's, three distinct shifts of emphasis had altered the original pattern of city mission organization: the acceptance of the urban poor as a specific and limited mission field, the tendency for melioristic to

replace millennial goals, and--to an extent--the substitution of moralism for pietism.

A fourth--and perhaps ultimately most significant--trend had also manifested itself during these decades. This was an increasing professionalization of the missions' staff. (By 1868, for example, the New York City Tract Society employed more than thirty salaried missionaries.) Indeed, by the 1860's, the professional salaried agent or missionary had become not only the organizational backbone of the missions, but, as well, a recognized, if variant, ministerial role. (Though it should be emphasized that not all full-time city mission workers were clergymen.) For some ministers it was a stopping place on the way to more traditional parish duties--to others a part of a new kind of career pattern. From the point of view of the history of the American ministry, the legitimization of the city missionaries' task represents part of a trend toward an increasing flexibility of ministerial roles. From a societal point of view, the city mission staff personnel and career workers were pioneers in the forging of a new professional role--that of the social worker. The city missionary was perhaps the first salaried expert on the social problems of the new city.

In the body of the chapter following, I have attempted to illustrate these institutional and attitudinal shifts in case histories of two of the missions already discussed, the New York City Tract Society and the American Female Guardian

Society. In the final two chapters I present two mid-century variations upon the city mission theme, two products of this increasingly secular and pragmatic period. One is the Five Points House of Industry and the other the New York Association for Improving the Condition of the Poor. The former was an organization financially dependent upon rural support; it sought--especially through the placing-out adoption system--to solve urban problems through essentially non-urban means, through a rejection of the city itself. The Association for Improving the Condition of the Poor was a formally secular, though highly moralistic offspring of the City Tract Society. This new agency explicitly divorced itself from a formal religious base and indeed justified its activities in terms of "scientific philanthropy." The institutional history of the Association for Improving the Condition of the Poor thus provides a highly useful framework for evaluating the transition between the evangelicalism of the city missions and the more melioristic, pragmatic mood which characterized their functional successors in the second half of the century.

.1.

NEW YORK CITY MISSION AND TRACT SOCIETY: 1837-1870

The evangelical impulse motivated and determined the goals and methods of the New York City Tract Society throughout its early years. Even at the height of the post-1837 depression, the Society remained essentially pietistic in

its expectations. It still sought primarily to convert all New Yorkers to "experimental" Protestantism.

Yet at the same time, the Society's missionary labors were gradually sharpening its members' concern for New York's slum population; knowledge in the activist 1830's, 1840's and 1850's implied responsibility. From viewing their city as simply one geographic area in need of its missionary attentions, the Society came to think of the peculiar challenges posed by urban life. As a result of its efforts to visit every family in New York, the Society's visitors began to distribute charity to the destitute, to seek jobs for the unemployed and new homes for those housed in unhealthy slum apartments.

The panic of 1837 and the depressed years which followed imparted an urgency to these unsystematic efforts--and soon involved the Society in large-scale relief work. With the first cold of the winter following the Panic, the tract distributors' reports reflected their awareness of the sudden rise in unemployment and destitution. "I never dreaded to visit my district so much as the last month," a visitor reported in December of 1837, "for I knew it would present scenes of suffering that I could not control the means to relieve." The following May another tract distributor warned that the distress had been dismaying and that "the usual streams of charity have apparently been dried up." Another visitor reported discovering a woman in her district dead for some time of starvation, her

seven-month-old child, still alive, by her side.[1] The Society's visitors reacted, not surprisingly, to such misery; spontaneously, they began to solicit contributions from the charitable and to distribute food, fuel, and clothing to the many families who faced cold, sickness, and even starvation. One visitor, for example, took personal responsibility for the temporal well-being of the sixty residents of a tenement in her district.[2] By the summer of 1838, the Tract Society's visitors had become agents for the ad hoc ward relief committees which had sprung up throughout the city, and the Society's officers, in their official reports, had begun to urge the philanthropically inclined to use the tract visitors as experienced if unofficial almoners. Who else, they asked, knew the city's poor and were so well prepared to oversee the distribution of alms?[3]

By the early 1840's, the minutes of the Society's executive committee become filled almost completely with discussions of the needs of the poor, with debates as to

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[1]N.Y.C.T.S., Eleventh Annual Report for the Year 1837 (New York, 1837), pp. 32, 139, 157-158, 172-173.

[2]Ibid., pp. 27-32, 35, 38-41, 59, 62; N.Y.C.T.S., Twelfth Annual Report for the Year 1838 (New York, 1839), pp. 32, 35, 50, 53, 58; N.Y.C.T.S., Thirteenth Annual Report for the Year 1839 (New York, 1840), pp. 15-17, 51-52; N.Y.C.T.S., Fifteenth Annual Report for the Year 1841 (New York, 1842), pp. 43, 51; N.Y.C.T.S., Seventeenth Annual Report for the Year 1843 (New York, 1844), pp. 29, 38, 47.

[3]N.Y.C.T.S., Eleventh Annual Report, p. 22; N.Y.C.T.S., Twelfth Annual Report, p. 28; N.Y.C.T.S., Thirteenth Annual Report, p. 36; N.Y.C.T.S., Fourteenth Annual Report for the Year 1840 (New York, 1841), pp. 16-17, 65.

the most efficient and economical means of distributing charity, and in seeking out philanthropists willing to underwrite the Tract Society's expanding relief activities. In the spring of 1843, the Society's executive committee circulated a memorandum among their ward missionaries, asking for their suggestions "as to the most efficient mode of ameliorating the condition of the poor, and detecting the frauds of impostors."[4] A month later, A. R. Wetmore, one of the Tract Society's founders and most active and generous supporters, conducted a survey of the opinions and experience of New York's more than forty active charitable societies.[5] By this time, the executive committee had come to the firm decision that New York needed a new, city-wide organization to supervise the distribution of relief. The role of almoner to the city's poor was too great a task for a religious tract society to undertake and still hope to fulfill its essentially evangelical goals.

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[4]N.Y.C.T.S., "Minutes of the Missionaries' Weekly Meetings, April 1, 1843." These minutes from February 24, 1838, to December 28, 1844, can no longer be located in the archives of the N.Y.C.T.S. However, in 1948, a verbatim copy of the notes was made by the N.Y.C.T.S. and sent to the Archives of the Community Service Society (the successor of the A.I.C.P.). This transcript is cited frequently in this section.

[5]N.Y.C.T.S., "Minutes of the Missionaries' Weekly Meetings, June 17, 1843." For a modern discussion of the founding of the A.I.C.P., and indeed of the history of the N.Y.C.T.S. throughout this period, see the account by Kenneth D. Miller and his wife, Ethel Prince Miller, The People are the City (New York, 1962), especially pp. 59-61.

In July of 1843, therefore, the Tract Society's executive committee voted formally to establish a separate "Society for the Relief of the Worthy Poor."[6] This organization--ultimately christened the New York Association for Improving the Condition of the Poor--was organized and administered, and financed, by the managers and directors of the Tract Society.[7] Its purpose was to take from the parent Society the administrative and manpower burden of caring for the poor the Tract Society visitors had found while acting as religious missionaries and to transfer this burden to the Association for Improving the Condition of the Poor.[8] In organizing this separate institutional apparatus to deal with the temporal needs of the poor, therefore, the City Tract Society only reaffirmed a continued dedication to its original pietistic goals.

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[6]N.Y.C.T.S., "Minutes of the Missionaries' Weekly Meetings, July 29, 1843."

[7]See, for instance, N.Y.C.T.S., "Minutes of the Missionaries' Weekly Meetings" from July, 1842, to December, 1844. The ties between the two organizations remained close throughout the pre-Civil War period. For instance, in 1860, the N.Y.C.T.S. wrote of the A.I.C.P.: "This institution and its parent the City Tract Society were proceeding hand in hand, seeking a common object, walking in the footsteps of Jesus . . . ." N.Y.C.T.S., Thirty-fourth Annual Report for the Year 1860 (New York, 1861), p. 15. See as well comments by tract visitors on their close working arrangements with A.I.C.P. volunteers. N.Y.C.T.S., Nineteenth Annual Report for the Year 1845 (New York, 1846), pp. 27, 32; N.Y.C.T.S., Twentieth Annual Report for the Year 1846 (New York, 1847), pp. 18-19, 25-26; N.Y.C.T.S., Twenty-ninth Annual Report for the Year 1855 (New York, 1856), pp. 29-30.

[8]For a more detailed treatment of the subsequent history of the A.I.C.P., infra, Chap. X.

And indeed in the years immediately following the establishment of the Association, the Tract Society returned to its original objective and methods, seeking to convert all New Yorkers through visitation and prayer. The annual reports of the mid-1840's contain no mention of Society volunteers visiting the city's slums nor of charity distributed (though some visiting among the poor undoubtedly continued). They provide no analyses of the causes or nature of poverty, nor any discussion of the growth of immigration and of slums. Such concerns had--they felt--been safely delegated. Indeed, the Tract Society's managers and visitors now studiously ignored economic differences within the city and spoke of only two classes in New York, saved Christians and those who "habitually neglect the ministry of the Gospel." The Society's efforts were turned again to the task of awakening New York's spiritually dead, and accounts of the hopeful conversions of atheists, Roman Catholics, and Universalists again filled the Society's reports. Storekeepers open on Sunday were rebuked, backsliders reclaimed and enrolled as members of evangelical churches. Visitors appeared at the doors of the respectable, the property-owning, even the wealthy. The Society's annual reports boasted carefully tabulated lists, recording with pride the numbers of souls saved that year and the numbers of the unchurched brought into communion. The City Tract Society had by the mid-1840's again become an evangelical

missionary society, not unlike its parent, the American Tract Society.[9]

Yet a Society whose visitors continued to proselytize among the city's poor could not long ignore the steady growth of slums and of poverty. Slowly this awareness compromised the Tract Society's hoped-for return to its original objectives. The establishment of the Association for Improving the Condition of the Poor had proved only temporarily successful; the Tract Society soon resumed its steady drift towards a social-service orientation. As early as 1850 the Tract distributors were again deeply involved in a broad program of assistance to the outdoor poor. The Society fed the hungry, brought the sick to the city's medical dispensaries, distributed clothing to almost-naked slum families and buried the destitute. Events of the 1850's--and especially the Panics of 1855 and 1857--only intensified this melioristic pattern of activity and the Society's growing commitment to work with the very poor. The annual reports for 1855 and 1856 comment poignantly on the amount of destitution, even starvation, found in the city. Cooperating closely with the Association for Improving the Condition of the Poor's volunteers, the visitors spent at least half their time distributing food and clothing and in other ways helping the unemployed. The Tract Society's

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[9]See, for example, N.Y.C.T.S., Nineteenth Annual Report, and N.Y.C.T.S., Twenty-third Annual Report for the Year 1849 (New York, 1850), for reports typical of this period.

annual reports began to include discussions of how to aid the poor without humiliating or pauperizing them. The directors appealed frequently to New Yorkers to find work for unemployed seamstresses and domestics and initiated a "Widow's Fund." By the 1860's the distribution of outdoor relief to needy families had become one of the principal functions of the Tract Society workers; the Society had again become thoroughly involved in ameliorating the condition of the urban poor.

This trend actually began in the late 1840's, when the Society's managers decided to limit their religious efforts to work with the city's slum population. The reasons for this decision were glaringly apparent. Most important was the startling increase in immigration--most of it destitute, unskilled, and Catholic--which followed America's returning prosperity and the European crop failures of the 1840's. These poverty-stricken immigrants as well as the infirm, the aged, the criminal would--or could--never voluntarily attend one of New York's established churches. They must, many religious New Yorkers concluded, be sought out in their tenement homes, converted and educated before they could be introduced to church membership. The City Tract Society was, it seemed clear to most of the city's clergy and philanthropists, the only organization equipped to perform such a task. Increasingly with the 1850's and 1860's, the Society became the emissary of New York Protestantism to the city's slum dwellers.

In 1846, in its Twentieth Annual Report, the Board of Managers of the New York City Tract Society announced that its greatest efforts were spent in praying with and distributing tracts "especially to the poor, the sick and the wretched."[10] Four years later, the Society's officers announced at their annual meeting that "while . . . tract distribution will inevitably scatter blessings on every side, it is pursued and practiced more particularly for the sake of the ignorant and the poor, the debased and forlorn!"[11] As early as 1845, the Society reported, pious Christians had begun to volunteer as tract visitors because they "wished to assist the poor."[12] With the 1850's, the visitors' and missionaries' reports again become filled with accounts of missionary work among the tenements and shanties of the poor. Descriptions of religious visiting among respectable New Yorkers decline in frequency, and by the end of the fifties become quite rare.

Paralleling these changes in the contents of the annual reports was a sharp structural alteration within the organization itself. This change centered on the executive committee's decision to hire salaried full-time workers to labor exclusively with the very poor and the immigrant. In the enthusiastic generation of its founding, the Society's

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[10]N.Y.C.T.S., Twentieth Annual Report, p. 18.

[11]N.Y.C.T.S., Twenty-fourth Annual Report for the Year 1850 (New York, 1851), p. 10.

[12]N.Y.C.T.S., Nineteenth Annual Report, p. 39.

zealous supporters had felt that all Christians must serve as missionaries, that all had the ability--and the responsibility--to convert their fellow citizens. By the 1860's, indeed by the late 1850's, pious New Yorkers, though loyal to the Society and its new goals, increasingly limited their commitment to a financial one. The Society's work was now performed by full-time, salaried, quasi-professional workers. And these agents did not simply pray and exhort; they had become expert in such matters as job placement, wage scales, public health, and the coordination of the city's numerous charities. Indeed, throughout the Tract Society's history there was a clearly marked inverse relation between decreasing numbers of volunteer visitors and an increasing number of full-time salaried workers.

The practice of hiring salaried missionaries had actually begun a number of years before the City Tract Society turned to work with the poor exclusively. In 1834, A. R. Wetmore had hired Samuel B. Halliday, then an active volunteer teacher in a Negro Sunday school, to act as the Society's first "city missionary." Halliday, as city missionary, was to serve as a full-time assistant to the district chairman, whose business responsibilities prevented him from devoting as much time as he wished to the evangelization of his district. Halliday supervised the work of the volunteer visitors, but more importantly, he spent each day visiting, distributing charity and holding regular

prayer meetings and Bible classes.[13] His success in increasing the number of converts in the district was immediately encouraging, and wealthy Tract Society supporters soon pledged a sum great enough to cover the wages of a missionary for each district. Through the 1830's and most of the 1840's, the Society employed between fourteen and seventeen salaried missionaries (the number dependent upon the Society's fluctuating income during these difficult depression years).[14]

At first the city missionary's role was a purely religious one. Missionaries worked in all wards and tried to convert New Yorkers of every social class. But in the late 1840's and early 1850's, the Society's executive committee began to hire additional missionaries to work specifically with the city's poor. The numbers of these missionaries to the poor rose dramatically during the 1850's and 1860's.[15] By the early 1860's, the Society employed thirty full-time salaried city missionaries, only nineteen of whom were regular ward missionaries (and thus dealing presumably with a cross section of the city's population).

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[13]N.Y.C.T.S., Eighth Annual Report, p. 24; N.Y.C.T.S., Eighteenth Annual Report for the Year 1844 (New York, 1850), p. 12; N.Y.C.T.S., "Report of the Committee Appointed to Study the Statements of Rev. Mr. Ortrom Concerning the Operations of the New York City Tract Society," 1840.

[14]The annual reports for each year state the number of paid missionaries engaged that year.

[15]See list of duties given by Amzi Camp, missionary for the Sixth Ward. N.Y.C.T.S., Tenth Annual Report, p. 46.

Three City Tract Society missionaries worked only with German-speaking slum-dwellers, four devoted themselves exclusively to the conversion of newly arrived immigrants, and three were assigned to work in particularly forbidding slum areas.[16] All city missionaries, moreover, beginning in the early 1850's were also employed by the Association for Improving the Condition of the Poor to act as ward secretaries, supervising the distribution of charity in each of the Association's districts.[17]

And as the Society began increasingly to emphasize the slum and the shanty in its work, the number of respectable Christians volunteering to work with this group gradually declined. This decline began in the late 1850's and progressed rapidly during the early 1860's. Finally, in 1870 the Society employed forty full-time salaried missionaries but could claim only 311 volunteers.[18] The Tract Society by the late 1860's had acquired a professional staff--had in essence ceased to be a volunteer society. The reasons are obscure. The 1850's and 1860's clearly saw a decrease

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[16]See, for example, N.Y.C.T.S., Twenty-sixth Annual Report for the Year 1852 (New York, 1853), p. 7; N.Y.C.T.S., Twenty-eighth Annual Report for the Year 1854 (New York, 1855), p. 16; N.Y.C.T.S., Twenty-ninth Annual Report, pp. 47-50; New York City Mission and Tract Society, Forty-third Annual Report for the Year 1869 (New York, 1870), p. 155. (In 1866 the Society changed its formal title to New York City Mission and Tract Society, hereinafter referred to as N.Y.C.M.T.S.)

[17]N.Y.C.T.S., Thirty-fifth Annual Report for the Year 1861 (New York, 1862), pp. 37-38.

[18]N.Y.C.M.T.S., Forty-fourth Annual Report for the Year 1870 (New York, 1871), p. 140.

in the Society's pietistic commitment and an increase in the onerousness of the visitors' tasks. Both phenomena can, however, be plausibly seen as differing aspects of a more general and pervasive response to urbanization and industrialization.

During the early 1850's the Tract Society officers began to consciously analyze the changed nature of their mission efforts. In 1852, for example, the Board of Managers of the City Tract Society for the first time publicly announced its decision to hire salaried missionaries to labor among the extremely poor and explained, at least in part, the reason for their decision:

> There are localities in our city which are very repulsive, and which could not be reached by our ordinary procedure. They are crowded with men and women deeply sunk in immorality, yet possessing immortal spirits and hastening to final judgement. For their especial benefit three assistant missionaries have been employed, and the measure has called forth pleasing testimonials of approbation from neighboring churches.[19]

The following year Theodore L. Cuyler--a prominent clergyman and long-time supporter of the Tract Society and other city missions--pointed with conscious satisfaction to the Society's newly specialized role as religious missionary to the city's tenement population.

> There is a tendency and a temptation to provide a gospel for the rich in goodly sanctuaries, forgetting that Christ came to save the lowly. It is to counteract this tendency to pride and pomp and circumstance that this Society goes out on its mission

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[19]N.Y.C.T.S., Twenty-sixth Annual Report, p. 16.

> of philanthropy. . . . Its city missionaries preach at the doors, in the garrets, underneath the ground and to the outcast everywhere.[20]

In 1864, the Society, recognizing its new role as spiritual guardian of the urban poor, applied to the New York State legislature for a title more accurately reflecting these new responsibilities. It wished to change from the New York City Tract Society to the New York City Mission and Tract Society, because--spokesmen explained to supporters and New Yorkers generally--it was no longer simply an organization which distributed tracts to all.[21] Its new model had become the London City Mission Society, and its new object to reach and convert the poor.[22] In 1869, when again seeking a new charter, the Society made the same point even more emphatically. "The objects of this corporation are to promote morality and religion among the poor and destitute of the City of New York . . . ."[23]

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[20]Theodore L. Cuyler, "Sermon at the Twenty-seventh Anniversary Meeting of the N.Y.C.T.S.," cited in N.Y.C.T.S., Twenty-seventh Annual Report for the Year 1853 (New York, 1854), pp. 10-11.

[21]N.Y.C.T.S., Thirty-eighth Annual Report for the Year 1864 (New York, 1865), p. 12.

[22]It was hardly a coincidence that the Reverend Frederick Clark, who proposed the name change, had just returned from a meeting of the London City Mission. Indeed during the late 1860's a number of the Society's officers visited England and Europe studying the institutions established by foreign philanthropists to aid the urban poor. Ibid; N.Y.C.M.T.S., Forty-first Annual Report for the Year 1867 (New York, 1868), p. 20; N.Y.C.M.T.S., "Executive Committee Minutes, November 11, 1867."

[23]N.Y.C.M.T.S., "Minutes of the Meetings of the Board of Trustees, December 15, 1869."

The methods of the City Mission and Tract Society changed with its objectives. In the 1840's the Society had still seen itself as an auxiliary of the city's churches seeking out converts and prospective members; its volunteers had visited, prayed, and distributed tracts. By the 1850's the Society had become itself a church for the poor. This was clearly a response to changing social conditions in the city and especially to its increasingly "compartmentalized" residential pattern. New York had always had its slums; but earlier in the century they had been within walking distance, often within sight, of respectable residential areas and well-attended churches. With the 1840's and 1850's, as we have seen, the respectable and the wealthy moved uptown and their churches with them. Few Protestant churches, evangelical or Episcopal, remained in the city's tenement districts, and possible Tract Society converts could turn nowhere for church membership or the counsel of a regular minister. There seemed no alternative; the Society's managers felt called upon to provide these religious outcasts with churches and pastors.

Beginning in the late 1840's (about the same time that the executive committee voted to hire special city missionaries), the Society's annual reports begin to mention the lack of regular churches adjacent to the city's slum districts. Soon such remarks assumed a more anxious, indeed accusing, tone; the churches of the wealthy had deserted

the poor.[24] Throughout the 1850's, the Society in each annual report announced the number of churches which that year had fled the crowded lower wards of the city.

As early as 1852, the Society began to act upon these observations. That year the executive committee voted a radical departure from its formerly exclusive reliance upon a system of visiting the homes of prospective converts by calling for the establishment of "mission stations" in churchless slum areas.[25] During the next ten years the Society established a total of eleven such mission stations and, as well, held scheduled prayer meetings and services in another twenty-five "halls."[26] These mission stations at first occupied a store front, loft, or tenement apartment in an area devoid of regular churches. Here the Society's ward missionary held regular prayer meetings and Sunday and weekday services. Soon the mission stations gave birth to Sunday schools, lending libraries, and reading rooms where the poor of the neighborhood might congregate. And here, at specified times each day, the poor could see their own special "pastor," the Tract Society's ward

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[24]See, for example, N.Y.C.T.S., Twenty-sixth Annual Report, pp. 21-22; N.Y.C.T.S., Twenty-seventh Annual Report, p. 16; N.Y.C.T.S., Twenty-eighth Annual Report, p. 10. This was a concern shared by most of New York's religious philanthropists. See, for example, an editorial in the A.F.G.S.'s Advocate, XXX (August 1, 1864), 178-179.

[25]N.Y.C.T.S., Twenty-seventh Annual Report, p. 16.

[26]N.Y.C.T.S., Thirty-sixth Annual Report for the Year 1862 (New York, 1863), pp. 19-20.

missionary, for spiritual guidance and temporal aid. For it was the ward missionary who now acted as pastor of these new slum churches.[27]

Gradually the Society began to see the importance of placing these missions in more permanent and substantial buildings. In 1864, the Society, having raised $100,000 from the city's business community, initiated an ambitious building program.[28] Large church buildings rose up in slum neighborhoods housing not only a church proper but, like the later institutional churches, a number of other subsidiary areas: schools, libraries, meeting rooms, even coffee lounges. "It is the aim of the Directors to give them [the poor] attractive mission stations and attractive preachers," the Society announced a few years later.

> They will make the mission station a centre of life, light and love; and religious services on the Sabbath, and moral and social entertainments through the week, will draw the people away from the evil influence of the saloons of frivolity, sensualism and vice, and save them and their children from destruction.[29]

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[27]N.Y.C.T.S., Thirty-eighth Annual Report, pp. 15-16; N.Y.C.T.S., Thirty-ninth Annual Report for the Year 1865 (New York, 1866), pp. 25-29, 39; N.Y.C.M.T.S., Forty-first Annual Report, pp. 35-37.

[28]"Report of Director," N.Y.C.T.S., Thirty-eighth Annual Report, p. 20; N.Y.C.M.T.S., "Report of the Directors," Fortieth Annual Report for the Year 1866 (New York, 1867), p. 21. On February 19, 1866, the State legislature granted the Society a new charter giving it the right to hold real estate, and thus to construct mission churches. N.Y.C.M.T.S., Forty-first Annual Report, p. 15.

[29]N.Y.C.M.T.S., Forty-first Annual Report, p. 18.

Clearly these enlarged "stations" filled much the same role that the Protestant Episcopal City Mission Society had hoped its mission churches would, that is, to be a church for the very poor. Indeed, the first mission station established by the Tract Society evolved, within the year, into a regular free church--the missionary of the district leaving the Society to become its first pastor. Another mission station, after ten years of operation, boasted 382 converts.[30] By the decade's end the Society decided to grant these now elaborate mission stations formal free church status. On December 15, 1869, the executive committee voted to establish regular "Christian congregations in the mission chapels." The stations had for fifteen years, the committee reported, and in some instances longer regularly attracted considerable numbers of converts and a large congregation. They should have the right to organize as regular church congregations with baptism, communion and--advised by the ward missionary--the right to admit members and elect officers.[31] The Society had come far from its origin as a simple tract-distributing organization; it was now a "mother of churches" for the poor.

With such deep institutional involvement in the spiritual life of the poor came as well a deepening concern

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[30]N.Y.C.T.S., Thirty-eighth Annual Report, p. 33.

[31]N.Y.C.M.T.S., City Mission Chapels, New York (n.p., n.d.), leaflet, N.Y.C.T.S. Archives. From internal evidence, the leaflet appears to have been written during the 1870's.

for their physical needs. The Tract Society's annual reports for the late 1840's and 1850's reflected constantly increasing interest in the environmental conditions of slum life. With the late 1840's the Board of Managers began to include in what were still essentially religious annual reports, articles on the wages paid women, on tenement conditions and the high cost of living.[32] In 1854, collaborating with other urban philanthropies but especially with the Association for Improving the Condition of the Poor, the Society helped found a home and industrial school for vagrant boys and a bath house for the poor of the Sixth Ward.[33] The Panics of 1855 and 1857 pressed visitors and missionaries into active relief work; by the 1860's, distributing money, food and clothing had again become--as it was in the early 1840's--a recognized and important function of the Society's visitors and ward missionaries. Ward missionaries also began to testify as expert witnesses before the various state legislative committees investigating health and housing in

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[32]For examples of this type of article, see: N.Y.C.T.S., Twenty-second Annual Report for the Year 1848 (New York, 1849), pp. 26-27; N.Y.C.T.S., Twenty-sixth Annual Report, pp. 20-21; N.Y.C.T.S., Thirtieth Annual Report for the Year 1856 (New York, 1857), p. 20; N.Y.C.M.T.S., Forty-first Annual Report, pp. 35, 41. The "Minutes of the Executive Committee Meeting for November 5, 1854," for example, note that the Society was in correspondence with the American Geographical and Statistical Society concerning the possibility of having a census taken of the invalid population of American cities.

[33]N.Y.C.T.S., Twenty-eighth Annual Report, p. 18.

New York City;[34] lengthy attacks upon tenement house conditions became a regular feature of the Society's annual report. "We would have the tenement-house system revolutionized," the Society urged in its 1864 Annual Report,

> we would have sanitary measures faithfully carried out for the protection of the people from disease and the promotion of health. We would that the honest, industrious, working poor were so housed that they might enjoy sunshine and pure air, and cherish in themselves and for their children the ideas of independence and self-respect.[35]

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[34]As early as 1842 and 1843, the Society's missionaries worked closely with John H. Griscom, helping him prepare his City Inspector's Annual Report . . . 1842 and his Sanitary Condition of the Laboring Classes. Not only did they prepare statements which Griscom included in his reports, but they provided him with detailed descriptions and statistics of cellar residences, then considered one of New York's principal public health problems. See, for example, Griscom, Annual Report . . . 1842, pp. 167-171, and Sanitary Condition, pp. 25-39. During the 1850's and 1860's, Samuel B. Halliday, the Society's first city missionary, was an active participant of the National Quarantine and Sanitary conventions which spearheaded and coordinated the public health movement during this period. In 1859, for instance, he was a delegate of the New York Sanitary Association to the Third National Quarantine and Sanitary Convention in New York City. The following year he was an active participant of the Fourth National Quarantine and Sanitary Convention held in Boston. He was a member of both the Committee on Plans for Tenement Houses and the Committee on Hours of Labor, and when he first rose to speak at the convention, he was introduced as "the American Chadwick, the American Sanitary Practitioner, who explores night and day, the purlieus of city life, and embodies in statistics the results of those observations." Third National Quarantine and Sanitary Convention, Proceedings and Debates Held in the City of New York, April 27th, 28th, 29th and 30th, 1859 (New York, 1859), p. 715; Fourth National Quarantine and Sanitary Convention, Proceedings and Debates Held in the City of Boston June 14, 15, and 16, 1860 (Boston, 1860), pp. 7, 59-61.

[35]N.Y.C.T.S., Thirty-eighth Annual Report, p. 22. See, as well, N.Y.C.T.S., Thirty-ninth Annual Report, pp. 46-47; "Report of the Directors," N.Y.C.M.T.S., Fortieth Annual Report, p. 27; N.Y.C.M.T.S., Forty-third Annual Report, pp. 148-149.

During the 1860's, the Tract Society began to undertake a number of eclectic and highly concrete measures designed to improve living conditions in New York's slums. These included a Fresh Air Fund, lodging houses for vagrants, an employment agency, and plans for a chain of inexpensive cafeterias for the city's working classes.

In 1868, the Tract Society's board of managers established their"Fresh Air Fund," a scheme allowing some among the slum poor to visit the country. The Fund was a product both of the city missionaries' familiarity with the oppressive tenement summer and the growing influence of public health ideas in city mission circles. The people's physical health had by the 1860's come to seem only a little less important than their spiritual health--indeed the distinction seemed an increasingly tenuous one. One way to improve health conditions was to establish summer resorts or camps where slum residents could escape for a day or perhaps even longer periods each summer. Certain subscribers, the Society announced in 1868, had already given money so that a few families could spend a day in New Jersey or Long Island. "At how little cost," the managers urged, "might there be an occasional treat of healthful enjoyment to those whose dreary and monotonous existence is scarce relieved by a bright scene or a merry hour through the livelong year!" Within a few years the Tract Society had

organized a flourishing system of summer camps, the descendants of which still exist.[36]

The same year that the Society launched its Fresh Air Fund, two of its ward missionaries opened their mission stations at night to vagrants--providing these destitute men with a cot to sleep on and a meal a day. The missionaries hoped in this way to exert some moral and religious influence over an ever growing number of homeless men. But in a more immediate sense, they were simply reacting to the tremendous amount of human misery they found in New York in the years immediately following the Civil War. It seemed appalling that able-bodied men, many of them Civil War veterans, could not even afford a bed in one of the Five Points' crowded lodging houses.[37] Soon a number of wealthy Tract Society supporters, made aware of the vagrant problem, subsidized the opening of two large residence halls to provide regular lodging for the city's vagrants.[38]

These same years saw the Society embark on two additional programs of temporal aid to the urban poor--born not of any overall moral design, but devised as simple expedients in the Society's daily struggle to aid the displaced and the unemployed. One was a plan to operate a chain

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[36]N.Y.C.M.T.S., "Minutes, Meeting of Board of Directors, July 22, 1868"; N.Y.C.M.T.S., Forty-second Annual Report for the Year 1868 (New York, 1869), pp. 43-44.

[37]N.Y.C.M.T.S., Forty-second Annual Report, pp. 16-17; N.Y.C.M.T.S., "Executive Committee Minutes, November 4, 1867."

[38]N.Y.C.M.T.S., Forty-fourth Annual Report, p. 46.

of inexpensive cafeterias for the laboring classes of New York. (A Tract Society member had observed such a system in operation in Glasgow and was much impressed by its success.)[39] Complementing both the lodging halls and the cafeterias was a fourth meliorative program, the Society's Helping Hand Society. This was an employment agency which sought jobs for the women and children contacted by the tract missionaries during their regular visits.[40]

While the hope of converting the recipients of such temporal aid still lay behind much of this Tract Society work, it was an ultimate and increasingly theoretical motive. Caring for the poor had become almost an end in itself; certainly it had become a respectable and self-justifying object for a Christian philanthropic organization. This was a situation far closer to the benevolent world of 1800 than that of 1835. Summer outings, inexpensive cafeterias and lodging houses, an employment agency--all such activities demanded an involvement in day-to-day concerns which, while not actually replacing pious goals, did place heavy demands upon resources of time, emotional commitment, and--not least of all--financial resources. By the late 1860's, the Tract Society had ceased to anticipate an immediate arrival of the millennium; it had, indeed, ceased to hope or even work for the conversion of all New Yorkers. But it did hope to care

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[39]N.Y.C.M.T.S., Forty-second Annual Report, pp. 158-160.

[40]N.Y.C.M.T.S., Forty-third Annual Report, p. 21.

for many of New York's vagrants, to provide summer excursions for a growing number of slum families, to find jobs for the unemployed--and in limited ways to ameliorate some of the conditions of slum life. In this way the officers now hoped to save some of the poor.

The city's needs, and changes in religious temper, had gradually and on the whole unselfconsciously molded and changed the highly flexible city mission institution. The pious founders of the New York Religious Tract Society in 1812 and the zealous evangelicals who supported the Tract Society in the late '20's and early 1830's would have had some difficulty in understanding and completely accepting this new pragmatic and melioristic shape their organization had assumed. By 1870 the New York City Mission and Tract Society had acquired a new title, new objectives, and new methods.

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AMERICAN FEMALE GUARDIAN SOCIETY: 1837-1870

The history of the American Female Moral Reform Society demonstrates, perhaps even more clearly than that of the New York City Tract Society, an increasing and ultimately absorbing concern for the day-to-day problems of the urban poor.

The Moral Reform Society had been founded in the early 1830's as a zealous and clearly feminist movement to end sexual transgressions and hasten the millennium; by the 1860's, the Society--renamed the American Female Guardian

Society--had become a shelter for indigent women, an employment agency, an educator of slum women and children. Instead of filling its publications with exhortations to moral and spiritual perfection, it now published analyses of city inspectors' reports on health and housing, articles concerning milk adulteration, and discussions of proper diet for the working poor. Increasingly knowledgeable in regard to the problems of slum life, the Society's managers embarked upon a highly eclectic "social service" program: they operated industrial schools for ill-clad and illiterate children; they rented sewing machines to unemployed seamstresses; they encouraged working women to organize and raise wages.

This change came slowly. At the opening of this second period, during the dozen years before 1850, pragmatic benevolence still remained secondary to the Society's traditional moral reform goals; enforcement of the Seventh Commandment was still the Society's primary aspiration. Despite a growing involvement with the temporal needs of New York's slum dwellers--especially in the years following the 1837 panic--the tone of the Society's Advocate of Moral Reform remained as staunchly evangelical as it had been in 1835 or 1836; quarterly and annual meetings still centered on the problems of achieving true sexual morality. The Advocate's editors continually warned their largely rural readership against novel-reading, the theater, and dancing. They urged mothers to instruct their children in matters of sexual morality and emphasized the dangers of promiscuity. Officers and members

still sought the salvation of rural areas through the distribution of moral reform literature.[41] Male as well as female moral reform societies increased in number, and the Society launched a vigorous lobbying campaign to secure the passage of a bill making seduction a felony.[42]

Even the New York Female Moral Reform Society, although more aware of urban poverty and unemployment than its rural counterparts, nevertheless devoted most of its time and energy--at least as late as 1845 or 1847--to the struggle against licentiousness. A few hardy members continued to visit brothels and prisons.[43] The executive committee worked diligently to secure the appointment of female wardens in the women's wings of state and city prisons. (It was hoped that such matrons would both protect the virtue of

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[41]American Female Moral Reform Society (hereinafter referred to as A.F.M.R.S.), "Quarterly Meeting Minutes, July, 1839"; N.Y.F.M.R.S., "Executive Committee Minutes, and October 24, 1838"; A.F.M.R.S., Thirteenth Annual Report for the Year 1847 (New York, 1847), pp. 4-5; American Female Guardian Society (the A.F.M.R.S. adopted this name in 1849; as indicated supra, it is referred to herein as A.F.G.S.), Sixteenth Annual Report for the Year 1850 (New York, 1850), pp. 8-9; Advocate, IV (April, 1838), 53. Indeed, through the 1830's the publications of the Society placed far more emphasis on reports from foreign missions than they did on the conversion of the urban poor (see, for example, Advocate, III (January 15, 1837), 195), while the executive committee spent a significant proportion of its time investigating the theological soundness of its agents and other employees. Cf. A.F.M.R.S., "Executive Committee Minutes, November 19, 1839, and June 3, 1846."

[42]Advocate, IV (January 15, 1838), 16; A.F.M.R.S., Twelfth Annual Report for the Year 1846 (New York, 1846), p. 1; A.F.M.R.S., "Executive Committee Minutes, October 24, 1838."

[43]Advocate, IV (January 15, 1838), 15; A.F.M.R.S., "Executive Committee Minutes, March 1, 1838, and April 22, 1845"; A.F.M.R.S., "Board of Managers, Minutes, June 2, 1847."

female convicts and exert a moral influence over them.)[44] The committee's minutes continued to record cases in which the Society helped women bring suit against their alleged seducers, and as late as 1845 and 1846, committee members worked to expose employment agencies suspected of being involved in the white slave trade.[45] With the help of their rural auxiliaries, the Society lobbied relentlessly for their anti-seduction measure, and in 1848 finally achieved a hard-fought victory.[46]

Yet this anti-seduction bill, though hailed by the Society's officers as an achievement of lasting significance, marked the end rather than a heightening of the Society's older millennial enthusiasm. The Moral Reform Society did not pursue its victory, but instead shifted its aims and emphasis. The same year, 1848, that the Society secured the passage of an anti-seduction bill, it also opened a "House of Industry and Home for the Friendless" in New York

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[44]A.F.M.R.S., "Executive Committee Minutes, September 10, 1840, September 15, 1840, and November 4, 1840"; A.F.G.S., Wrecks and Rescues, by an Early Member of the Board of Managers of the American Female Guardian Society (New York, 1859), pp. 196-210; S. R. I. Bennett, Wrought Gold (New York, 1875), p. 28.

[45]It was the New York Society's policy to aid all seemingly "worthy" seduced women who contacted them to bring suit against the alleged seducer. See A.F.M.R.S., "Executive Committee Minutes, 1843-44," passim; A.F.M.R.S., "Executive Committee Minutes, February 12, 1845, and July 8, 1846."

[46]A.F.M.R.S., "Executive Committee Minutes, January 5, 1842, February 18, 1842, April 25, 1844, and January 8, 1845"; A.F.M.R.S., Eleventh Annual Report for the Year 1845 (New York, 1845), p. 3; A.F.M.R.S., Fourteenth Annual Report for the Year 1848 (New York, 1848), p. 12.

City. The Home was both a shelter for the city's abjectly destitute women and children and a center where they might be taught skills and placed in secure jobs or homes--though preferably in a rural community.

The idea of opening a shelter and of placing women and children in rural homes had had a long germinal period. As we have already seen, the officers of the New York Female Moral Reform Society had begun in the late 1830's--especially in the years following the Panic of 1837--to distribute temporal charity and to concern themselves with the material problems of the poor. This work had developed originally in the hope of preventing indigent women from turning to prostitution and was thus considered by the Society's managers as but one aspect of their crusade for moral prophylaxis. But the ladies were motivated as well by a real concern for the sufferings of the slum poor they met while distributing tracts. In 1837, the Reform Society opened a "register," or employment agency, in an effort to find jobs for needy yet morally upright females. Two years later, the Society's visiting committee began to regularly distribute food and clothing with its tracts. Their bethel missionary devoted much of his time to visiting and preaching at the Five Points and at other slums, thus supplementing the work of the visiting committee. Gradually the bethel missionary and the visiting committee began to seek homes and jobs for the destitute women and children they encountered.[47]

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[47] Supra, Chap. V.

(Appeals were made in the pages of the Advocate of Moral Reform as well as informally among urban members.) The depression of the 1830's and '40's spurred their efforts, heightening the distress felt by New York's poor.

As knowledge of the Society's newly assumed functions spread, the poor began to present themselves directly at their Register, many homeless or with children they could no longer support and wished to place for adoption. By the mid-1840's, the Society's register was overwhelmed with applicants for work, its visiting committee dismayed by the constantly increasing demands of the city's indigent women and children. In 1843-44 the Register received 633 applications for work, the next year 1,415. In this latter year, the visiting committee also distributed 1,500 garments and 249 pieces of bedding along with its moral reform and temperance tracts. The Society's rural auxiliaries were quickly enlisted in this new charitable field; they contributed food, money, and clothing, and sought homes for both children and adults.[48] The American Female Moral Reform Society had--it would seem--become deeply and irrevocably committed to work with the urban poor.

At the same time--the late 1830's and early 1840's--members of the New York executive and visiting committees began to take into their own homes--or to board informally

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[48]A.F.M.R.S., Tenth Annual Report for the Year 1844 (New York, 1844), pp. 4-8; A.F.M.R.S., Eleventh Annual Report, p. 5; A.F.M.R.S., Twelfth Annual Report, pp. 6-10.

at their own expense--particularly destitute and worthy women and children. They hoped that appeals in the Advocate of Moral Reform might find jobs and homes for these unfortunates.[49] The depression, however, multiplied the numbers of such homeless dependents far beyond the capacities of a few private individuals. In 1842, as a consequence, the executive committee began to discuss the possibility of establishing a permanent home where the unemployed and homeless could be taught new skills and sheltered until jobs and homes could be found for them.[50] But even after the depression had lifted, funds were hard to raise. Although not giving up hope of building a permanent shelter, the New York Female Moral Reform Society decided to open a temporary "Home for the Friendless and House of Industry."[51]

Opened in July of 1847 on First Avenue at Second Street, the "Home" contained a large workroom as well as dormitories for women and children. Its "inmates" were

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[49]A.F.M.R.S., "Executive Committee Minutes, December 1, 1841, and December 8, 1841"; Advocate, IV (March 15, 1838), 46; A.F.M.R.S., Eleventh Annual Report, pp. 5-9; Halliday, "History of the Home for the Friendless," The Little Street Sweeper; or, Life Among the Poor (New York, 1859), p. 238.

[50]A.F.M.R.S., "Executive Committee Minutes, January 5, 1842." The New York officers were clearly influenced in their decision to open a Home by the example of the London Society for the Protection of Young Females, which sent a brochure and corresponded with the New York Executive Committee, "Minutes, July 13, 1842, and of 1844," passim.

[51]A.F.M.R.S., "Executive Committee Minutes, December 17, 1845, November 4, 1846, November 18, 1846, June 2, June 23, and June 30, 1847."

as a group basically similar to those already coming to the Register: widows, mothers with dependent children, and young girls entering the job market.[52] While still planning their home, the Society's managers had reported to the New York Evangelist that it would be directed largely towards aiding the city's unemployed women. (Particular attention would be paid to recent arrivals from the country who, despite high expectations, had been unable to find work and were thus quickly reduced to destitution.) The Society claimed in 1846 that there were thousands of such unemployed women in New York. Jobs must be found for them, though--they added sadly--most would remain unemployed while they remained in the city's crowded labor market.[53]

But before work could be sought for such needy women, they had to be equipped with new skills. Adults were taught sewing, hatbox-making, basket-weaving, and other simple crafts in the Society's workshops. Children, often illiterate, were instructed in basic reading and writing--and both women and children were of course instilled with the basic tenets of evangelical religion and social morality.[54] Appeals for jobs appeared regularly in the Advocate of Moral Reform, especially for positions in the country where mothers could bring

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[52]A.F.M.R.S., "Executive Committee Minutes, July, August, September, 1847," passim.

[53]A.F.M.R.S., Twelfth Annual Report, pp. 1-2.

[54]A.F.M.R.S., "Executive Committee Minutes, November 10, 1847"; A.F.M.R.S., Thirteenth Annual Report, p. 4; A.F.M.R.S., Fourteenth Annual Report, p. 4; Northrup, Record, pp. 31-32.

their young children. The ladies assured rural subscribers that those rescued from the slums would happily work for "moderate" wages.[55]

During 1847-1848, while still in their temporary rented home, the Society gave shelter to 334 adults and 271 children. Homes were found for 204. The next year the Society admitted 407 adults and 237 children. Two hundred and ninety-eight women found jobs; 144 children were placed in foster homes or apprenticed.[56] In 1849, the Society petitioned the State legislature and won an important change in its charter, one which formally sanctioned their placing of destitute children--with the consent of the child's natural parents--in rural foster homes.[57]

The previous year, the Society, pressed for space by an ever-expanding number of applicants, had finally been able to purchase five lots on Fifth Avenue between Twenty-ninth and Thirtieth Streets--in the mid-1840's still almost a suburban location. In December of 1848, the building was completed and the following spring received its first occupants. The Home and House of Industry was four stories high

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[55]See, for example, A.F.G.S., Fifteenth Annual Report for the Year 1849 (New York, 1849), pp. 15-18; A.F.G.S., Seventeenth Annual Report for the Year 1851 (New York, 1851), p. 4; A.F.G.S., Nineteenth Annual Report for the Year 1853 (New York, 1853), p. 9.

[56]A.F.M.R.S., "Executive Committee Minutes, December, 1847, and January 5, 1848"; A.F.G.S., Fifteenth Annual Report, p. 13.

[57]"An Act to Incorporate the American Female Guardian Society Passed April 6, 1849," reprinted A.F.G.S., Fifteenth Annual Report, inside front cover.

and contained dormitories, a workroom, chapel, school rooms, nursery, the business offices of the Society, and editorial offices for the Advocate.[58] Between the spring of 1849 and 1855, the Society sheltered and trained 2,140 women and 1,537 children. Another fifteen hundred New Yorkers found jobs through their employment service; 739 children were apprenticed or placed in foster homes.[59]

The ladies hoped in constructing this substantial building to provide only a temporary refuge for the destitute and vagrant until they found their way to rural and Protestant homes. This practice of finding rural homes for dependent city children and adult women was known to contemporaries as the placing-out system, and by the mid-1850's it had become enormously popular among American philanthropists. The Female Moral Reform Society was one of the first American organizations to develop this adoption scheme, but it was not alone in employing it. The Children's Aid Society, the Five Points House of Industry, the Five Points Mission, the Juvenile Asylum and many similar philanthropic groups in New York and other eastern cities relied upon the

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[58]A.F.G.S., "Executive Committee Minutes, May 9, 1848, and December 19, 1848"; A.F.M.R.S., Fourteenth Annual Report, p. 4. For details concerning the financing of the House, see A.F.G.S., Fifteenth Annual Report, p. 12. Halliday in "Home for the Friendless," pp. 241-242, gives a detailed description of size and layout of the Home.

[59]Each annual report contains statistics for the Home and the employment register.

placing-out system.[60] All thought of it not simply as a pragmatic humanitarian means for dealing with needy individuals, but as a real contribution to the solution of the peculiar dilemmas of urban poverty--by securing, that is, the moral, and religious reform of an alien poor.

The Moral Reform Society had the advantage of being able to call upon its far-flung network of auxiliary societies in seeking homes for women and dependent children. Beginning in the early 1840's, as we have seen, these local groups had been asked to find homes for vagrant women and children; by 1847, this had become one of the normal functions of these rural subsidiaries.[61] The annual reports regularly carried lengthy appendices of stories and letters concerning homeless or neglected children. (The reports were printed in large editions for fund-raising and promotional purposes.) Increasingly, as well, the columns of the Advocate were filled with similar tales of starving, mistreated children desperately in need of loving Protestant homes;[62]

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[60]Charles Loring Brace, Dangerous Classes of New York, and Twenty Years' Work Among Them (New York, 1872); Emma Brace, The Life of Charles Loring Brace Chiefly Told in His Own Letters (New York, 1894); Miriam Z. Langsam, Children West. A History of the Placing-Out System of the New York Children's Aid Society (Madison, Wis., 1964); Carroll Rosenberg, "Protestants and Five Pointers: A History of the Five Points House of Industry," New-York Historical Society Quarterly, XLVIII (October, 1964), 327-347.

[61]A.F.M.R.S., "Executive Committee Minutes, May 5, 1847, January 25, April 26, 1848, October 24, November 14, 1849."

[62]See, for example, A.F.G.S., Seventeenth Annual Report, pp. 8-10; A.F.G.S., Nineteenth Annual Report, pp. 12-19.

the Society had already composed a standard form to be signed by any family taking a child from the Home:

> This may certify, that I have this day, _____, received into my family, J_____ N_____, from the Managers of the 'Home for the Friendless' and that I hereby engage to train this child with a view to her present and future well-being; to regard her interests, mental, moral, and physical and so educate her in these respects that she may become a blessing to herself and to others. I also engage to inform the Managers annually or semi-annually respecting the welfare of the child.
>
> (signed)_____[63]

Each child adopted would--hopefully--be rescued from the physical and moral evils of the city, each started upon the road to a productive and Christian life.[64]

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[63]This form appeared for the first time in the Society's Fourteenth Annual Report, p. 6, and appeared in each subsequent annual report. Legal guardianship rested with the Society until the family formally adopted the child. The Society attempted to send an investigator to visit the child each year, either a member of the official Visiting Committee, or, if that were not possible, then a member of a nearby auxiliary. The "Children's Secretary" in New York City was also expected to correspond with the family and to keep a complete record of each child who passed through the Home. The Society's Executive Committee was not unaware of the dangers inherent in such a loosely organized system and not infrequently discussed cases where children were mistreated by the family caring for them. See, for example, A.F.G.S., "Executive Committee Meeting Minutes, February 19, May 21, September 9, October 1, 1851." E. C. Ray in John Bancroft Devins, A True Greatheart (New York, 1912) describes the hardship and emotional deprivation experienced by at least one child apprenticed by the Society at mid-century to a farm family; this situation was presumably not uncommon.

[64]The Society by developing the placing-out system emphasized its commitment to the family as the only satisfactory environment for raising a moral and Christian child. The conflict as the Society saw it was not between the institution and the family but between the undesirable slum family (often immigrant and Roman Catholic) and the farm

In opening their Home, in seeking to train women for new trades, in finding homes for the destitute, the New York executive committee had shifted away from its original millennial objectives and committed both the New York society and its rural auxiliaries to a highly eclectic and expensive program of meliorism in dealing with the problems of the urban poor. In effecting and justifying this radical change in their organization's aims and activities, the ladies had, during the 1840's, gradually and imperceptibly redefined the moral objectives of the Society as well as its methods of operation.

Throughout its early years and indeed into the 1840's, the Society had thought of moral reform exclusively in terms of sexual morality, of observing the Seventh Commandment. Geographic location or economic status were of little significance; only the soul's relation to God mattered. And in the Society's early years, America's rural communities were a principal field of exertion; there was an undeniable emotional rapport between pious church members in such

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family (always Protestant). "The Society," its managers announced at the commencement of their placing-out program, "would in no case encourage the sundering of parental ties, unless a determined course of vice or such extreme destitution as might prompt to it, is known to exist." A.F.M.R.S., Thirteenth Annual Report, p. 12. A few years later in response to a letter urging them to consider adopting a cottage system in their Home, the managers reasserted their basic assumption that the family and not an institution was the proper environment for a young child. Children, the ladies responded, remained in their Home for as short a time as possible; their Home was only a means of facilitating the removal of children from undesirable homes and placing them in desirable ones. Advocate, XXX (October 1, 1864), 229.

communities and evangelically oriented ladies who had founded and now administered the Moral Reform Society. (And it soon appeared evident that there were vast reservoirs of licentiousness to be assailed in village as well as metropolis.)

The opening of a shelter and workroom implied a distinct--if unselfconscious--shift from this early understanding of moral reform. Yet it was no sudden break, but as we have seen one which came only after a decade of work with the urban poor. The Society had originally undertaken these secular tasks in an effort to save destitute women and girls from a life of prostitution. It was thus a kind of preventive moral reform. Increasingly, however, workers and officers came to see tenement life as a moral evil in itself, not simply as a factor promoting sexual license. Slum life brought with it constant threats not only to sexual morality, but to every aspect of an upright Christian life. Filth, laziness, begging, illiteracy were--like sexual license--inextricably related to the misery which accompanied tenement life. The more deeply involved in the life of the slum dweller the Society became, the more its workers tended to think of moral reform in terms of the prevention of this pervasive moral degeneration rather than exclusively in terms of sexual misconduct.

This redefining of moral reform was a gradual though steady process--yet one never formally announced. It is, however, apparent in the Society's changed mission activities

and in the terminology they employed in discussing moral decay and moral reform. The first explicit indication of this change occurred in 1845 when the Moral Reform Society announced in the Advocate that its first great aim, the purification of American society, had been largely accomplished. The promiscuity and lewdness acceptable ten or fifteen years earlier in circles ostensibly Christian, the ladies reported with satisfaction, was now unthinkable.[65] The Society was ready to assume new responsibilities. They still maintained, however, a simultaneous commitment to both pietistic and melioristic programs, at the same time, for example, lobbying for an anti-seduction bill and raising contributions for their Home for the Friendless. The new charter requested and obtained by the Society in 1849 clearly reflects this same mixture of aims and methods. "The object and business" of the American Female Moral Reform Society, the charter stated, "shall be, by the publication of books, papers and tracts, and by other moral and religious means, to prevent vice and moral degeneration and," it added, "to establish and maintain Houses of Industry and Homes for the Friendless, destitute or unprotected females, and for friendless or unprotected children."[66] In 1851, the Society's managers recalled with a natural if convenient inaccuracy that:

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[65] A.F.M.R.S., Tenth Annual Report, p. 9.

[66] "Act to Incorporate the American Female Guardian Society."

> one of its chief aims from the beginning to the present time, has been to reach, by moral and Christian influences, that class in society peculiarly exposed to moral and physical degradation and want.: viz.: young females and children who have been by untoward circumstances placed upon the list of the homeless and friendless.[67]

Thus by 1851, the objects of moral reform had been defined in largely environmental terms. The success of the Society's pious crusade now hinged not simply upon an individual's religious conversion, but upon his social and economic elevation as well. Prayer was still an important instrument in the crusade, but jobs, education, vocational training had become essential tactical devices. This was no longer the cause of John McDowall.

This development can be seen with particular clarity in the Society's increasing emphasis upon work with children--in contrast to their original concern for the salvation of adult females. In 1855-1856, the Society's managers sharply altered the policy of their home by admitting children in preference to adults; only the most destitute and helpless of adult females were admitted. Three-quarters of the Home's inmates in 1855 were children, a percentage which remained constant into the 1870's.[68] Adults were certainly more difficult to place than children--and their rescue always more

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[67]Reported in the Independent, III (May 10, 1851), 77.

[68]A.F.G.S., Twenty-second Annual Report for the Year 1856 (New York, 1856), p. 10. For statistics for subsequent years, see the annual reports for those years.

problematical.[69] More significantly, however, within the complex of social assumptions shared by the Society's managers, and their rural supporters, saving young children had a peculiar importance.

By the time he reached maturity, the ladies believed, the slum resident was irretrievably warped; even a child removed from the slum at ten or eleven years of age would never be able to achieve his full moral, or even educational, potential. The slum was a spiritually disfiguring experience. The only possibility of escape lay in physical removal to the pure--and Protestant--air of the countryside while the child was still an impressionable pre-adolescent. This was clearly the rationale behind the adoption of the Society's placing-out system. "How shall we save the children," the Society's officers asked in 1859, "how bridge the social chasm into which the parents have fallen, and where their hapless offspring must soon likewise perish unless rescued by Christian hands?"[70] Each passing year made reform less likely; by adolescence the prospect was almost hopeless--at least while the child remained in the city. In the country, however, subjected to a wholesome Christian atmosphere, even hardened street-boys might soon be converted not only to evangelical religion, but to a

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[69]See, for example, complaints about the difficulty of working with adult women. A.F.G.S., Fifteenth Annual Report, pp. 12-13.

[70]A.F.G.S., Twenty-fifth Annual Report for the Year 1859 (New York, 1859), p. 3.

rural, prudent, and productive style of life. By the simple process of removing slum children from the city, the Society felt assured, urban poverty and its accompanying moral depravity might largely be eliminated.[71] Indeed, a child's escape from the tenement was often imperative for physical as well as spiritual reasons. Infant mortality rates had begun to shock concerned New Yorkers--as had the slum child's precocity in vice.

The managers of the Society refused accordingly, between 1848 and the Civil War years, to accept any child for admission to the Home unless his parents or guardians were willing for him to be placed in a rural, Protestant home.[72] Nor were the managers content to leave the fate of the city's slum children to chance or the random persuasion of visiting committee members. In 1849, the officers of the American Female Moral Reform Society combined with those of the New York Association for Improving the Condition of the Poor, the New York City Tract Society, and the Juvenile Asylum to petition the state legislature for the passage of a truancy and vagrancy act,

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[71]Editorials and vignettes depicting the happy and moral life led by children placed in rural homes from the mid-1850's into the 1870's characterized every issue of the Advocate and each annual report. They clearly indicate that the Society's officers held a very stylized and negative view of the city and of the moral effect of slum conditions upon the individual.

[72]The executive committee established this policy shortly after they opened their Home in the fall of 1848. A.F.M.R.S., "Executive Committee Minutes, October 25, 1848, and April 4, 1849."

> whereby dissipated and vicious parents by habitually neglecting due care and provision for their offspring, shall thus forfeit their natural claim to them and whereby such children shall be removed from them and placed under better influences, till the claim of the parent shall be re-established by continued sobriety, industry and general good conduct.[73]

Clearly the ladies had come, by the late 1840's and 1850's, to view the city and the city's poor in the dimmest possible light.

But although the rhetoric of the Advocate implied a continuation of this rejection of the city into the 1860's, the day-to-day activities of the Society and its approach to urban problems underwent another distinct change in the late 1850's. In 1855 and again in 1857, the Female Guardian Society officers and workers had closely observed the effect of two major depressions upon the city's economy, upon the urban poor, and upon existing philanthropic programs. The Society's officers and workers came gradually to the conclusion that the solution to urban poverty could not be found in institutionalizing or in sending large numbers of indigent away from the city. A change of scene might morally reform a few among the new generation and ultimately reduce urban poverty--but it offered (or so it seemed to Society workers by the late 1850's and 1860's) no real solution to the overwhelming social disorganization of the slum.

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[73]A.F.G.S., Twentieth Annual Report for the Year 1854 (New York, 1854), p. 8; see, as well, A.F.G.S., Our Golden Jubilee, p. 38.

Christian philanthropists had to work in the slums and help correct the conditions they found.

At no time, indeed, had the Society ever relied upon the placing-out system to the complete exclusion of other, more melioristic solutions to urban poverty. In 1849, for example, when the Society accepted 407 destitute women in their Home, their register received over 2,000 applications for work. That same year members of the visiting committees busily distributed food and clothing with their tracts and Bibles.[74] Indeed, with the mid-1840's, the Society had begun to give piece work in their Home's workshops to particularly needy women who had applied at the Register but could not immediately be placed in jobs or rural homes. By 1859, almost twelve hundred such women were at one time or another employed in this workshop (while the supervisors, of course, read to them from the Bible).[75] The job register received an ever-greater number of applicants for both work and immediate relief; in the early 1860's they reported an average of from one to three hundred applications daily.[76] In the face of this need, the visiting

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[74]A.F.G.S., Fifteenth Annual Report, pp. 9, 13. The Executive Committee Minutes for the 1850's are filled with accounts of relief given by members of the Society's active visiting committee to slum families.

[75]A.F.M.R.S., "Executive Committee Minutes, September 24, 1845"; A.F.G.S., Fifteenth Annual Report, p. 9; A.F.G.S., Sixteenth Annual Report, p. 95; A.F.G.S., Twenty-fifth Annual Report for the Year 1859 (New York, 1859), pp. 8-9; Halliday, Little Street Sweeper, pp. 241-242.

[76]A.F.G.S., Twenty-seventh Annual Report for the Year 1861 (New York, 1861), p. 26. For employment agency statistics, see the Society's annual reports.

committee increased its membership and the amount of charity it distributed, working closely with the visitors of the Association for Improving the Condition of the Poor.[77]

All such work drew the Society into increased contact with slum conditions and its workers and managers into more systematic plans and programs for ameliorating the misery they encountered. In 1859, for example, the officers of the Society instituted a program of selling sewing machines on reasonable installment terms to New York seamstresses. The Society's managers had noted that the incipient mechanization of the ready-made clothing industry had already begun to affect New York's working women. Most of the tasks in the needle trades were still done at home on a piece-work basis; but increasingly, however, shop managers would let out work only to women who owned sewing machines. Other entrepreneurs forced their piece workers to rent machines at exorbitant daily rates. It was to remedy such injustice that the Society decided to buy and resell machines at low rates; this was not an ideological decision, but a natural and eminently practical attempt to solve a discrete social problem.[78]

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[77]A.F.G.S., Twenty-fifth Annual Report, pp. 9-10; A.F.G.S., Twenty-eighth Annual Report for the Year 1862 (New York, 1862), p. 26; A.F.G.S., Twenty-ninth Annual Report for the Year 1863 (New York, 1863), pp. 18-19.

[78]A.F.G.S., Twenty-sixth Annual Report for the Year 1860 (New York, 1860), pp. 18-19.

Far more important to the Society's involvement in this eclectic meliorism were its industrial schools. These schools were established to provide rudimentary education and industrial training for children too ill-clothed, too ill-educated and insufficiently motivated to enter the public school system; such children were the "hard-core" poor of the 1850's.[79] The schools sought to prepare these charges for either jobs or the public schools by teaching, reading, writing and some crude skills. The ladies hoped, at the same time, to bring a modicum of moral and religious influence into lives otherwise dismayingly "heathen."[80] It is

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[79]The ladies' attitude towards their students and towards the function of the industrial school system is clearly seen in the comment of an industrial school teacher on preparing students for admission to the public school system. "It would," she wrote, "be pleasant to retain the children with us when they become our best scholars, but the objects of the school can be better secured by advancing them to the Ward schools, and receiving others to fill their places who need also to be humanized, decently clad and fitted to receive like benefits." A.F.G.S., Twenty-eighth Annual Report, p. 19. As soon as a child seemed adequately prepared and sufficiently motivated, the ladies sent him to one of the regular public schools; the inevitable alternative to their industrial schools, the ladies were convinced, was a career of rag-picking, street-begging, or crime.

[80]As the Society's officers stated in 1862: "As . . . a way to reach the masses, who seldom or never enter the sanctuary, and especially to 'save the little children of poverty and crime,' they prove to be the 'more excellent way,' too long undiscovered. . . . As the Sabbath-school is the nursery of the church, so are these to some extent, the nursery of the Sabbath-school. The children when first gathered, come in the costume of the vagrant, utterly forlorn and neglected." A.F.G.S., Twenty-ninth Annual Report, p. 14. For descriptions of school routine, see A.F.G.S., Thirty-fourth Annual Report for the Year 1868 (New York, 1868), p. 28; "Extracts from the First Report of the First Home Industrial School," printed in S.R.I. Bennett, Woman's Work Among the Lowly. Memorial Volume of the First Forty Years of the American Female Guardian Society and Home for the Friendless (2d ed.; New York, 1880), p. 200.

apparent from the Society's discussions of their industrial schools that they thought of them as a necessary compromise between doing nothing and the more thoroughgoing--if often unrealizable--solution offered by the placing-out system.[81] The group of children affected was essentially the same. The ultimate end was similar as well--to return the outcast, degraded slum child to society.[82] But while one emphasized flight from the city, the other implied a commitment to work in the worst of the city's slums. For years, the Society employed both methods in its war against the moral blight of tenement life.

The idea of an industrial school had come partially from the example of the London "ragged schools" of the period, partially from the example of a small industrial school run by a group of women on Avenue D in Manhattan. During the winter of 1853-1854, the Society opened its first industrial school, located at the Home itself.[83] That spring, the Society could boast a registration of 105 and an average

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[81]The ladies early found immigrant families, especially Catholic immigrant families, no matter how destitute, staunchly unwilling to surrender their children to the Home and placement in distant Protestant families. The children they received were either vagrants or the children of widows who simply could no longer provide for them.

[82]See, for example, comments in A.F.G.S., Twenty-seventh Annual Report for the Year 1861 (New York, 1861), p. 19; A.F.G.S., Thirty-fifth Annual Report for the Year 1869 (New York, 1869), pp. 13-14.

[83]A.F.G.S., "Executive Committee Minutes, February 11, September 8, March 1, March 8, June 27, 1854"; A.F.G.S., Twentieth Annual Report, pp. 8-12; A.F.G.S., Golden Jubilee, pp. 39-40.

attendance of between fifty and sixty. The first school was limited to girls, a reflection of the Society's traditions and stated aims.[84] Three years later, the managers assumed the responsibility for a second industrial school located on West Forty-first Street when the school's founders, a group of concerned church ladies, requested them to do so.[85] In 1861, the Society opened two additional schools, one of which was for boys.[86] In 1868, the Society's schools boasted a total registration of 2,941. The managers hastened to add, however, that with "a class so migratory and irregular in their habits," average attendance was usually one-third of total registration; a year later average daily attendance was 823.[87]

A principal function of the industrial schools had been from the beginning to feed, care for, and clothe the slum children who entered their classrooms. The clothing, bedding, and shoes made by the school children as part of their industrial training were distributed to their families--as was much additional clothing and food donated by the Society's rural auxiliaries. The teachers soon began to visit their scholars at home--and improved such opportunities by instructing and reproving wayward parents. By

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[84]A.F.G.S., Twentieth Annual Report, p. 14.

[85]Northrup, Record, p. 38.

[86]A.F.G.S., Twenty-eighth Annual Report, pp. 18-24.

[87]A.F.G.S., Thirty-first Annual Report for the Year 1865 (New York, 1865), p. 15.

1863, indeed, the efforts of the visiting committees as well as that of the industrial school teachers had become almost monopolized by the needs of the industrial school children's families.[88] A pragmatic institutional program had once again evolved in an increasingly narrow and pragmatic direction. The Society's efforts were now concerned almost exclusively with the slum child and his family (practically speaking, with those children and families socialized enough to make an appearance at the Society's industrial schools). In 1869, for example, they cared for 1,300 children in regular attendance at their industrial schools and distributed hundreds of thousands of items of food and clothing.[89]

Despite their increasing devotion to work with children, the Society continued a number of other charitable programs through the 1860's. Their job register, for example, continued to serve as a focus for benevolent work of various kinds. In 1860, the register accepted job applications from some 674 unemployed women and found jobs for 340. In 1869, one thousand women found employment through the Register.[90] The Society continued as well to support the Mariner's Family Industrial Society, founded in the late 1830's by the then

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[88]A.F.G.S., Twenty-ninth Annual Report, p. 16; A.F.G.S., Thirty-first Annual Report, p. 33; A.F.G.S., Thirty-fourth Annual Report, p. 15; Advocate, XXXI (March 1, 1865), 53.

[89]Advocate, XXXV (June 1, 1869), 124.

[90]A.F.G.S., Twenty-sixth Annual Report for the Year 1860 (New York, 1860), p. 14; Advocate, XXXV (June 1, 1869), 124.

bethel missionary, Samuel B. Halliday.[91] (This organization aided the destitute female relatives of seamen.)

Perhaps the Society's sharpest break with its practice of sending the poor to rural homes came during the Civil War. Under the pressure of aiding the families of union soldiers, the Society's officers began to accept the destitute and frequently orphaned children of these soldiers as temporary boarders at their Home. There the children could remain until their father was located or more permanent arrangements made for their support. The Society's managers did not require that the mother surrender legal guardianship of the boarded children, nor that she agree to their placement in distant rural homes. Though this program began as a pragmatic response to the dislocation of the Civil War, the Society maintained and expanded it. The managers began shortly to take as temporary boarders the children of "worthy" slum families whose parents, through sickness, death, or sudden unemployment, could no longer provide for them, though unwilling to place their children for adoption. Most of these children had their first contact with the Society through the industrial schools. By 1864, the officers reported that they regularly accepted a sizeable number of children temporarily. "The Home," they added, "was never so full as at present, the applications for its sheltering care never so numerous."[92] To augment this boarding program, the

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[91]Bennett, Wrought Gold, p. 35.

[92]Advocate, XXX (October 15, 1864), 238; A.F.G.S., Thirty-first Annual Report, p. 12.

Society in 1870 also opened a "Shelter" or transient boarding-house for homeless working women.[93] The conjunction of both programs marked a sharp reversal of the Society's earlier attempts of the 1840's and 1850's to institutionalize the adult poor and seek a solution to urban poverty in flight from the city's slum and the urban labor market. Where in 1850 the officers had insisted that destitute women and children enter their Home and accept the rural places found for them, twenty years later the shelter and Home more modestly helped tide indigent women and families over temporary hardship--helped them ultimately to adjustment within the city.

The development of these two institutions was typical; other city missions, the Protestant Episcopal City Mission Society, for example, also drifted gradually in the direction of a melioristic--though still moralistic--concern with the inhabitants of their city's tenements. Similarly, individual churches throughout the city began in these same years to develop ambitious programs of local social service--establishing precedents for the institutional churches of later generations. Middle-class, church-going New Yorkers had become increasingly aware of the needs of their city's slums while the habit of pious activism made this awareness a call to action.

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[93] A.F.G.S., Golden Jubilee, p. 46.

CHAPTER IX

By 1850 the city had, as we have seen, become a very real and very threatening part of American life. With each census the percentage of Americans living in cities grew, and with this growth seemed to come a corresponding increase in poverty, crime, illiteracy, and irreligion. Yet it was neither census figures nor police reports which made Americans conscious of this change. Statistics have little emotional meaning for ordinary men. Men are moved by incident and example, and New York's Five Points dramatized to many the evil which the growth of cities seemed inevitably to create.

The Five Points House of Industry, founded with much publicity and assurance in 1854, soon became one of New York's best known and most influential city missions. The circumstance of its founding and subsequent development throw a good deal of light upon the new influences reshaping the city mission movement during the 1850's and 1860's--and as well upon the influence exerted by the city mission movement upon American social thought and philanthropy generally.

The Five Points House was itself a product of the city mission movement. It was founded not as a pietistic expression of the Second Great Awakening, but specifically to save the urban poor--whose spiritual and temporal condition the early city mission had done so much to publicize. The Five Points House was thus inspired not in the then millennial goals which had shaped the American Female Guardian Society or the New York City Tract Society, but within the more limited task of saving the residents of New York's worst slum.

In its choice of mission field, the Five Points House revealed not only Americans' growing awareness of urban poverty, but as well the increasing horror felt by respectable and largely rural Americans at the growth of urban slums and of immigration. The Five Points House's founders chose the Five Points as their mission field for very much the same reasons that, a generation earlier, the founders of the Female Moral Reform Society chose prostitution and licentiousness--it was for them a most grievous example of the evil afflicting American society. Significantly, in the twenty years between 1834 and 1854, the evil had lost its transcendent spiritual essence and become a social and economic problem, though with markedly moral overtones.

The history of the Five Points House of Industry demonstrates as well other aspects of this later city mission movement. The founders and workers of the Five Points House experimented with almost every method of aiding the

city's poor--temperance, institutionalization, workshops, the placing-out system. Finally, like the City Mission and Tract Society and the American Female Guardian Society, overwhelmed by the numbers and the needs of the urban poor, the Five Points House adopted an eclectic and melioristic program of aiding the city's tenement dwellers. The history of the Five Points House is thus in many ways a paradigm of the city mission movement as it developed during these years--between 1850 and 1870.

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The idea of establishing a permanent chapel and resident minister at the Five Points came first from a group of devout and respectable New York women. These ladies, members of the Ladies Home Missionary Society of the Methodist Episcopal Church, had since 1843 worked among New York's immigrants and slum dwellers, seeking to bring them to God. They besieged incoming immigrant ships with tracts and Bibles, founded chapels among the German ragpickers of Bloomingdale, and established Sunday schools and Bible classes in the city's dingiest neighborhoods. In 1848 they turned to the spiritual needs of the Five Points and within two years had secured a Board of Trustees from among New York's most prominent merchants and men of wealth. Among them were Anson G. Phelps, William B. Skidmore, and

Daniel Drew. In 1850 the Five Points Mission was officially incorporated.[1]

In May of that year their first missionary, Louis M. Pease, arrived at the Five Points. With the ladies' help he established a mission chapel in a small room at the corner of Little Water and Cross Streets, diagonally across from the Old Brewery itself. From this central location Pease and his sponsors spread out over the Five Points, holding prayer meetings, distributing tracts, comforting the sick and destitute. Soon they were able to number 45 persons in their weekly Methodist classes and 70 children in their Sunday school. Two hundred attended Sunday services in their crowded and ill-equipped room. Encouraged, the ladies decided after a few months to open a charity day school--children who spent six days of the week in street gangs, sweeping street corners for pennies, or begging their meals, could not be expected to reform their ways after one Sunday morning. By the winter of 1850-1851 one hundred

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[1] Christian Advocate and Journal, XXVII (January 15, 1852), 10; (April 22, 1852), 67; XXVIII (May 19, 1853), 78; William F. Barnard, Forty Years at the Five Points (New York, 1853), pp. 10-11; The Ladies of the Five Points Mission, The Old Brewery and the New Mission House at the Five Points (New York, 1854), pp. 36-37; Louis Pease, "Five Points Mission," Monthly Record of the Five Points House of Industry, I (August, 1857), 114-116. This chapter has appeared in a somewhat different form in the New-York Historical Society Quarterly, XLVIII (October, 1964), 327-347.

children were in daily attendance at the ladies' school, and two full-time teachers were employed.[2]

As Pease and the Methodist ladies worked at the Five Points, they came increasingly to accept two principal factors as causes of the poverty and misery surrounding them. The first was intemperance, the second, unemployment. Even children, the ladies reported in distressed tones, came to classes intoxicated; attempts to find positions for men and women were frustrated when they arrived at their jobs too drunk to work. Resolutely the Society organized weekly temperance meetings, distributed temperance tracts on street corners, and urged all who attended Sunday services to sign the pledge. Pease frequently invited temperance advocates to speak at the mission house and insisted that all his charges attend these "Band of Hope" meetings. School children were sent home with temperance pledges in their pockets and temperance hymns on their lips.[3]

But as the summer wore on, the Methodist workers became increasingly convinced that exhortation and prayer meetings

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[2]Ladies of the Five Points Mission, Old Brewery, pp. 37-39; Pease, "Five Points Mission," Christian Advocate, XXVI (February 13, 1851), 28; XXVII (January 29, 1852), 19. Timothy L. Smith puts the work of the ladies in the context of Methodist perfectionism, Revivalism and Social Reform, in Mid-nineteenth Century America (New York, 1957), pp. 169-171.

[3]W.S., "First Fruits," Monthly Record, II (1858), 85; Thomas S. Eells, "Leaves from My Journal," The New Charitable Monthly or "What is Done for the Poor," I (March, 1855), 40-42; "A Story for Today," New Charitable Monthly, I (February, 1855), 22-28.

had little effect upon the filth and wasted lives at the Five Points. Daily experiences--visits to the poor, conversations with the parents of school children--showed them that drunkenness, crime and prostitution were not simply willed acts of immorality but might also be responses to the want and despair of slum life. Indeed, Pease soon decided that prayer and good example could neither win the confidence of the poor nor aid them in efforts to reform. The poor needed regular jobs before they could be expected to profit from lectures on morality.[4]

Within two months of his arrival, Pease persuaded a local textile manufacturer to provide him with piecework for the neighborhood women, and then, not unlike the Female Moral Reform Society, converted his evening prayer room into a sewing shop by day. All who came were given work provided that they were sober on arrival, agreed to sign a temperance pledge, and promised to lead moral, respectable lives. Within a week 40 women were busily engaged at the mission. With the hardships and unemployment of winter, Pease became increasingly involved with his workshop. He sought not only to provide charity in return for a job done, and thus to lift the morale of the poor and test their good intentions, but also to teach the adults of the neighborhood useful trades to prepare them for

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[4]Pease, "Five Points Mission," Christian Advocate, XXVI (February 13, 1851); Pease, "Calls upon our Neighbors," Monthly Record, I (June, 1857), 56-62; Henry M. Hudson, "The Five Points House of Industry," Monthly Record, II (1858), 17, 32, 67.

outside jobs. By February, 1851, he could report that 60 adults had obtained regular employment as a result of his training while another 42 were still at his mission, learning such simple trades as sewing, baking, and cobbling.[5]

But jobs were not an end in themselves. The purpose of the missionary work of Pease and his sponsors had always been the ultimate religious and moral reformation of the poor. Displaying an interesting mélange of pietistic, moralistic, and melioristic values, Pease and his associates insisted that jobs were an essential, but only a preliminary, means. Before they could hope to effect the eternal salvation of their charges, the workers at the Five Points House had first to instill self-respect, to provide an honest alternative to crime, and to enable families to find homes away from the corruptions of the Five Points. Pease contended, in what was perhaps an unconscious secularization of traditional Calvinism, that all men were born with certain "infirmities." Early moral training, virtuous associates, and religious habits would inhibit these evil inclinations. "An individual who leads a comfortable life in the ways of virtue, will not once in ten thousand cases turn a thief, a sot, or a harlot; because, deep as the moral corruption may be, the mind is generally strong enough to keep the passions within the bounds of obvious and immediate interest." But "our outcast poor" did not have this early

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[5]Pease, "Five Points Mission," Monthly Record, I (August, 1857), 116-117.

moral training, and far from having good associates, were surrounded by every temptation. It was natural, therefore, that Pease would want to supervise not only the working hours of his charges, but their home life as well; like the Female Moral Reform Society he saw poverty, intemperance, immorality, and unemployment as interrelated problems and the poor most often as the weak and incompetent of society. There was no hope, Pease concluded, only a few years after the Ladies' Society had, of effecting moral reformation in any family that remained subject to the depraved influence of Five Points companions. Accordingly, he rented a house in August at 3 Little Water Street--next to the Methodist chapel--moved his own family there and required that all who sought a place in his workshop leave their homes and live with him. In return he would find them jobs and a good home with some Protestant family. In February, 1851, Pease expanded his operations and rented an adjoining building. Between May of that year and January, 1852, he provided shelter and work for some three hundred persons.[6]

Although he received support from the Ladies Missionary Society, Pease had from the beginning borne complete financial responsibility for his combined workshop and home for

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[6]Pease, "Thy Weak Brother," New Charitable Monthly, I (June, 1855), 81-85; Pease, "Address of the Reverend L. M. Pease to the Trustees of the Five Points House of Industry," Act of Incorporation, By-Laws and Address of the Trustees and Superintendent (New York, 1854), pp. 5-7.

inebriates. By the second winter, with the number of applicants for help increasing, Pease found that he could no longer expand his operations without outside assistance. It had also become apparent to Pease and the ladies that one man could not supervise a workshop and day school and minister as well to the spiritual needs of a community of several thousand. In May, 1851, they reorganized their work. Pease, with the financial assistance of the National Temperance Society, took charge of his workshop and school (to be known as the Industrial Temperance Home). The ladies applied to the Bishop of the diocese of New York for a minister to assume Pease's religious duties at their Methodist chapel. Thus the relationship between Pease and the Methodist ladies ended. After May, 1851, there were two separate missions at the Five Points, the Methodists' Five Points Mission and Louis Pease's workshop and home.[7]

Until June, 1852, relations between Pease's Home for Inebriates and the Five Points Mission continued to be amicable, and the two institutions worked closely together. Between June and November, 1852, however, relations must have become strained, for on November 12th the board of trustees of the Mission announced in the New York Daily Times that Mr. Pease was not connected with the Mission and had not been for the past 18 months. On the 18th of November

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[7]Imogen Mercein, "Ladies Home Missionary Society," Christian Advocate, XXVI (June 5, 1851), 91; Pease, "Efforts at the Five Points," Christian Advocate, XXVII (January 29, 1852), 19.

the Mission complained in the Christian Advocate that Pease had been slandering its work. Within the year the dispute had hardened into an open breach. The Ladies Home Missionary Society called Pease an infidel, a socialist, a communist, and a Fourierist, while Pease charged the ladies with sectarian bias. It is difficult to discover the real cause of the rift since both parties later claimed that it occurred when Pease left the Mission in 1851--although it clearly did not occur until much later. It probably originated in the competition between the two missions for financial support. And since both organizations were simultaneously expanding their operations, rivalry might also account for the conflict.[8]

The next few years were difficult ones for Pease. Within a year of establishing his independent mission he was again without financial support. The Temperance Alliance had replaced the National Temperance Society, and under its new constitution the Alliance was not free to support such undertakings.[9] For the next three years Pease was forced to assume personal responsibility for financing his small mission. Fortunately, he was able to call upon the financial resources of the Church of the Ascension, and of its minister,

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[8]Pease, "Efforts at the Five Points," Christian Advocate, XXVII (June 17, 1852), 99; XXVIII (December 8, 1853), 194; XXX (February 22, 1855), 30; Pease, Letter to the Editor, New-York Daily Times, December 21, 1852, December 20, 1852; Hudson, "Five Points House," p. 36.

[9]Pease, "Address to Trustees," Act of Incorporation, pp. 6-7; Barnard, Forty Years at the Five Points, p. 15.

the Reverend G. T. Bedell. From 1850 until 1865 the vestry of this fashionable Episcopal church supported the Five Points Day School, and in 1854 the vestrymen persuaded a group of prominent New York businessmen to act as a board of trustees for Pease's mission. In April of that year, the Five Points House of Industry was incorporated.[10]

When seeking legislative incorporation in 1854, Pease stated the threefold aims of his proposed corporation: to aid the destitute to support themselves by helping them to secure employment, to care for children and others unable to provide for themselves, and, finally, "to imbue the objects of its care with pure principles of Christianity." This was a highly eclectic approach to a solution of the problems of urban life. It encompassed both religious and temporal measures and included every possible category of the unfortunate: the criminal, the alcoholic, the unemployed, the unwanted child, and the handicapped adult. His mission was, as Pease put it in 1855,

> expressly designed to lend strength and support to infirmity of every kind, by a variety of methods, and while educating and patronising the children, extending a strong and friendly arm to the parents also. The complexity of our social existence cannot be evaded, and we claim it as an evident truth, that in so far as a system of benevolence ignores or neglects any of the parts of social man, its work is perverted and wasted.[11]

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[10]"Certificate of Incorporation of the Five Points House of Industry, March, 1854," manuscript copy, Five Points House Archives, New York City.

[11]Ibid.; Pease, "Thy Weak Brother," p. 83.

Yet no single mission could have helped everyone in need at the Five Points. Each day and each admission forced Pease, and after 1857 his successors, to decide which of those among the increasing number of applicants were to be helped. With these decisions came inevitable compromise and change.

Between 1850 and 1854, in the years before its incorporation, the Five Points House had provided lodgings and found jobs for approximately two thousand persons. Many were children, but men and women also came to the Five Points House to learn trades or to find positions as domestics, clerks, and farm hands.[12]

But with incorporation, expansion, and increasing experience came a reappraisal of the House's policies. Gradually Pease and his successor, Benjamin R. Barlow, who took over when Pease resigned in 1857, began to work more and more exclusively with children. While over two-thirds of the inmates of the House were adults in the year 1854-1855 (778 to 426), by 1863 this ratio was completely reversed: two-thirds of the House's beneficiaries were

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[12]In 1854, for instance, Pease employed 2 men and 30 women at sewing, 16 girls at basket-weaving, 3 men and 10 boys at shoemaking, and 25 men at an Eastchester, New York, farm which had been donated to the mission. Much of the House's expenses were met by the proceeds of work done on the premises. Between July, 1850, and March, 1854, $26,684 was realized from such sales--more than half the total expenditures for the period ($49,000). (Five Points House of Industry, First Annual Report, April, 1854 (New York, 1854); Five Points House of Industry, "Second Annual Report, April, 1855," New Charitable Monthly, I (May, 1855), 57-64.)

children under sixteen. By 1865 this proportion had increased to four-fifths.[13]

The House had changed. Founded as a workshop and employment agency, it had within a half dozen years become a nursery, a school, and an adoption agency. For homeless children the House provided a day school, hot meals, and free clothing. The center of all this activity was Pease's rapidly growing school. From the 772 children enrolled in 1855, attendance rose to 1,200 in 1856, and by 1859 to 2,317. In the 11 years from 1855 through 1865, 15,593 children attended the Five Points school. By 1861, $1,600 annually was expended for teachers' salaries and another $6,380 in supplying the children with hot meals.[14]

The goal of the superintendent of the Five Points House was not simply to shelter and educate these children until they were old enough to enter the city's labor market. The hope, whenever possible, was to remove them from the city completely, to find them homes--or at least jobs--with rural

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[13]Five Points House of Industry, "Second Annual Report"; Five Points House of Industry, "Report of Trustees, March 1, 1856, and March 1, 1857," Monthly Record, II (March, 1859), 248-250; III (May, 1859), 7-9; V (August, 1861), 13; VII (May, 1863), 6-7, 34-37; VIII (December, 1865), 116.

[14]Monthly Record, III (March, 1860), 280-281; V (December, 1861), 171; VI (June, 1862), 38; (August, 1862), 86; VII (May, 1863), 6-7; VIII (December, 1865), 116. Still, in 1863, as Barlow pointed out, there were sixty thousand children of school age in the city not attending any school--over five thousand of them in the neighborhood of the Five Points alone.

Protestant families. Profiting by the examples of the American Female Guardian Society and the Children's Aid Society, the House of Industry developed a carefully organized program encouraging rural families to adopt these city children. The trustees established local committees in rural areas where children were likely to be adopted. These committees emphasized equally the duty of caring for such waifs and the advantage of having an extra pair of hands for farm and domestic work. Each issue of the mission's monthly magazine featured stories, written with elaborate pathos, of orphans and beggars desperately in need of a loving home with some fine Protestant mother. So successful were these pleas that the House rarely had to resort to the methods of the Children's Aid Society, which sent "caravans" of children from town to town until all were either adopted or employed. For the most part, those interested in adopting a child through the House of Industry had to come in person to choose him. It was not until the winter of 1861 that their rural supporters failed the House in this regard. That year Barlow had to send 17 children west in a caravan with children from the Five Points Mission and the Children's Aid Society. Though children were occasionally ill used, they were more often, it would seem, treated as the equals of a family's other children.[15]

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[15]Monthly Record, II (February, 1859), 225-226; Barnard, Forty Years at the Five Points, p. 21; Admission Ledger, entry for July, 1862, pp. 751-752, Five Points House Archives. For a survey of how children "placed out" were treated, see Samuel Halliday, Monthly Record, VIII (April, 1866), 206.

Why did the House turn increasingly to work with children? Two factors explain at least part of this change. The first was the depression of 1855, which undermined the assumption of many New Yorkers that their city's economy could absorb all the unskilled thousands who arrived annually in search of employment. The second factor was the failure of Protestant missionaries to make any appreciable number of converts among the Five Points' predominantly Irish Catholic population.

In the late summer and early fall of 1854, the New York business community noticed the first faint symptoms of a financial panic; by that winter the city was in the depths of a major depression. Declining industrial activity, business frauds, and unsound speculation had combined with a prolonged drought and crop failures to precipitate strikes and riots, a stock market panic, and a run on the city's banks.[16] By early December, twenty thousand families had already applied for relief to New York's chronically crowded almshouse. Many private charities had exhausted their resources, and the poor harvest brought high food prices and even scarcity. Relief committees were organized in 12 of the city's 22 wards to distribute clothing and fuel and to organize soup kitchens. The committees received contributions from individuals and businesses

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[16]Federal Reserve Bank of New York, Index of Estimated Cost of Living in the U.S., April, 1955; Federal Reserve Bank of New York, Index of Wholesale Prices in U.S., July, 1951; New York Association for Improving the Condition of the Poor, Twelfth Annual Report, 1855 (New York, 1855), pp. 13-36.

throughout the city, from the English Opera playing at Niblo's, from Barnum's Museum, and even from Lundenmuller's lowly beer garden.[17]

The newly incorporated Five Points House mobilized all its resources. During the first three weeks of January, 1856, the House fed some nine thousand persons in addition to its own residents. In the four winter months from November, 1855, through February, 1856, Pease distributed forty thousand meals and twenty-eight thousand articles of clothing, as well as substantial quantities of fuel, medicine, and groceries. At the same time he received 254 persons into the House, cared for 300 children in the schools, and employed 250 adults in the workshop.[18]

While New York philanthropists were encouraged by their achievements in helping the unemployed and in staving off class violence, their optimism did not outlast the depression winter. By the summer and fall of 1856, as reformers and missionaries took stock of their experiences,

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[17]A.I.C.P., "Minutes, Board of Directors, January 8, February 12, March 12, and April 9, 1855," manuscript copy, Community Service Society Archives; A.I.C.P., Twelfth Annual Report, pp. 24-25; Alan Nevins and Milton Halsey Thomas, eds., The Diary of George Templeton Strong (4 vols.; New York, 1952), II, 208-209; "What is Done for the Poor," New Charitable Monthly, I (January, 1855), 1-8; New-York Daily Tribune, November 8, 1854, January 1 and 5, 1855.

[18]"Five Points House of Industry," New Charitable Monthly, I (February, 1855), 28-31, 44-45; Five Points House of Industry, "Second Annual Report," pp. 57-64.

pessimism began to replace the buoyancy and optimism characteristic of reform writing during the preceding decade. To many New York philanthropists, indeed, it seemed as if their years of work to find jobs for the poor, to prevent pauperism, and to introduce "scientific principles" into philanthropy had been swept away in the bitter winter. Beneath the commercial and physical growth of their city they now discerned increasing poverty--poverty which for many would prove chronic and irremediable. It seemed to Pease and to many others associated with New York's missions that the city could never provide steady employment to all who sought jobs there. On the contrary, every winter would find a growing number, even of hard-working and thrifty workmen, thrown upon the dole and the good-will of the benevolent. Whereas previously these philanthropists had looked forward to the day when public health reform, the Maine Law,[19] and personal exhortation would wipe the curse of poverty from the city, they now admitted that the combination of individual incompetence and a seasonal labor market would keep many men and women dependent upon the city's almshouse and upon the charity of private organizations. So long as immigrants and farmers' children kept flocking to the city, many of them would inevitably find only cold,

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[19]In 1846 the Maine legislature had passed the first prohibition law in the United States. The term "Maine Law" became synonymous with prohibition.

hunger, and misery. The winter of 1855 seemed but an acute phase of a chronic phenomenon.[20]

Pease, and indeed a majority of New Yorkers, believed that the only permanent solution to this problem of unemployment lay in somehow transferring the poor from the city to the countryside, where, they assumed, there would always be work for the willing. Poverty in a country as rich in resources and as underpopulated as the United States was unnatural. It resulted, Pease maintained, from an improper distribution of the labor force: too great a proportion of the nation's manpower had been trapped through ignorance or folly in the city's slums. This, Pease felt, was the lesson the House had learned in 1855.[21]

During these months of suffering and want, everyone connected with the Five Points House had attempted to find jobs or homes in the country for all who came to them seeking aid. The trustees blanketed neighboring communities in Westchester County, New Jersey, and Long Island with circulars describing the sufferings of the poor in New York.

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[20]Pease, "Periodical Destitution in the City," New Charitable Monthly, I (March, 1855), 33-38; A.I.C.P., Annual Reports for 1854, 1855. See also Pease's articles: "What Shall Be Done for Our Poor," Monthly Record, I (November, 1857), 170; "The Question Before Us," "Emigrant Employment Society," "The Reverses of Labor--Public Employment," New Charitable Monthly, I (January, 1855), 17-18, 36-38, 49-50.

[21]Pease, "Periodical Destitution," pp. 33-34; Pease, "The Reverses of Labor," pp. 49-50. Nor did the attitude change. Three successive superintendents dotted their monthly magazine with articles warning would-be immigrants to the city of the dangers and misery of urban life.

They pleaded with all who could to hire some of the city's unemployed, or at least to offer them board and room in return for farm or domestic labor. As a result, during December alone, the House received hundreds of requests for domestics and children. It was forced, indeed, to advertise for unemployed women to come to the mission to fill places in the country. By January Pease was sending sixty New Yorkers a week to positions in rural communities. And by 1857 the House had announced that it would refuse aid to any adults who would not agree to leave the city if jobs could be found for them elsewhere.[22]

But the Five Points House was more than workshop or employment agency. It was an outpost of Protestantism among the infidel and, especially, the Roman Catholic. One of Pease's objects, like that of all New York's numerous city missionaries, was the conversion of the poor--conversion, of course, to the evangelical Protestantism espoused by the Methodists, Presbyterians, and low church Episcopalians who supported the mission movement. (Unitarians, Universalists, and Catholics, no matter how devout, were almost certainly damned.) No Five Pointer, no matter how cleanly, thrifty, or moral, could be considered saved until he had personally experienced Christ's saving grace.

The winter of 1854-1855 was a pointed lesson in the futility of attempts to help individuals earn a secure

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22"What is to be Done for the Poor," New Charitable Monthly, I (January, 1855), 8-10.

livelihood in the city; each day of the House's existence underlined the dispiriting conviction that the religious conversion of the Five Pointers was a goal even more illusory than that of finding them jobs. Despite the House's temperance sermons and prayer meetings, the moral and religious climate of the Five Points remained unchanged. Apartments were still filled with the drunken and the criminal. Most discouraging of all was the fact that Sunday and weekday services were attended only by a few native-born Protestants and by the mission's school children.[23]

The predominantly Irish Catholic population of the Five Points, having resisted centuries of British efforts to wean them from their traditional beliefs, viewed with hostility and resentment the appeals of these new-world Protestants. With instinctive unity of purpose they boycotted "Old Pease's School" and all who attended it. They refused tracts and Bibles and ignored the House's temperance meetings, prayer sessions, and Sunday services.[24]

The House's superintendents were not equipped to deal sympathetically with so recalcitrant a flock. They had been raised to view the Church of Rome as the "Harlot" of Revelations and Catholic theology and liturgy as a collection

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[23]Pease, "Our Mission Work," Monthly Record, I (September, 1857), 125-134.

[24]B.N., "Sabbath Scenes," Monthly Record, II (September, 1858), 109-116; III (September, 1859), 110; VII (February, 1864), 259-260; "Bible Reader's Report," VIII (December, 1865), 125-126.

of medieval superstitions. In attempting to win these new immigrants to Protestantism, they criticized their priests, scoffed at the Sacraments, and particularly derided the Mass and the Eucharist. This was hardly the way to win converts, and those deserting the Church of Rome were few indeed. With repeated failure the workers at the House became increasingly bitter and pessimistic. With ever greater frequency the House's Monthly Record carried articles and editorials critical of the Church, which attributed the intemperance, filth, and irreligion of the poor to the doctrines and practices of Catholicism. By the 1860's the workers at the House had accepted the fact that hopes of converting adults to Protestantism were doomed to failure. "We have," as one editorialist put it, "long ceased to expect any marked results of our labors among this class of people."

> The adults of the neighborhood are mostly Catholics, and have no disposition to enter a Protestant place of worship, even had they decent garments in which to appear. Our expectations of great results among this class are not as strong as they were three years since. . . . They seem inaccessible to any good influence, and it is only by removal and a change of circumstances, that we have much hope of seeing these barriers broken down, and a willingness manifest to listen to the truths of the Gospel.[25]

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[25]Pease, "Who are Our Inmates," Monthly Record, I (February, 1858), 252-255; Barlow, V (August, 1861), 73; Pease, "Dance House of the Five Points," I (October, 1857), 147-153; Archibald Russell, "Presidential Address, Ninth Annual Meeting, April, 1862," VI (June, 1862), 38; Halliday, VIII (August, 1865), 56.

By the 1860's the Five Points House had limited its efforts largely to the "accessible," to the few industrious Protestants of the Points, and, in particular, to the children. If the House of Industry could not save those confirmed in their sin, it might deter their children from following a similar course.

.2.

Yet despite their emphasis both in theory and in practice upon work with children, the superintendents of the House of Industry could not so limit themselves. As the mission's Bible readers and teachers visited the tenements of the Five Points to gather their charges for school, they encountered families without food or fuel, mothers sick and without medicines, houses filthy and poorly ventilated. When possible, they offered immediate assistance--loaves of bread, tea, medicines. By the 1860's the House was providing four thousand hot meals a week to adults resident at the Points as well as operating a medical dispensary with the help of philanthropic physicians. Since few tenements had the luxury of running water, the House enlarged its bathing facilities so that every Five Pointer could bathe if he so desired. Superintendent Halliday, so long an advocate of temporal charity and public health and tenement house reform, succeeded Barlow in 1864. He immediately organized detailed surveys of housing conditions

and proposed specific housing and public-health legislation based on these surveys.[26]

The Five Points House, like the Female Moral Reform Society, could not long rely on flight as a solution to urban problems. In daily residence at the Five Points, workers at the House began increasingly to think in environmental terms--to see the poverty of their motley flock as something more than simply the reward of drunkenness, incompetence, or immorality.

But these traditionally accepted causes of poverty could hardly be discounted; they were too much a part of the assumptions of individual responsibility which the mission workers and their supporters had grown up believing. Both the ideas and the practices of the Five Points House reflected a workable eclecticism, a willingness to adopt both temporal and spiritual means to alleviate poverty, and to assume both moral and environmental causes for the misery they sought to combat. If their position was in some respects inconsistent, the inconsistency never became apparent to the generation which founded and staffed the Five Points House of Industry.

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[26] Monthly Record, III (March, 1860), 58-61; IV (May, 1862), 12-17; (August, 1862), 90-91; VII (February, 1864), 263-265; VIII (September, 1864), 74-75; (December, 1864), 119-121; IX (November, 1865), 101-102.

CHAPTER X

The depression of 1837 lingered for years in New York City. As late as 1842, thousands of mechanics, unskilled laborers and seamstresses remained unemployed, dependent upon the Alms-House, private charity, or street-begging for food and shelter. The winter of 1842-1843 brought with it a new recession and consequent hardship. Not a few articulate New Yorkers began to fear that many of the city's workingmen would never again find regular employment--that their pauperization was inevitable. It was during these months and in response to such ominous premonitions that New Yorkers already concerned with city mission work organized the New York Association for Improving the Condition of the Poor.[1]

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[1]A.I.C.P., Address to the Public, Constitution and By-Laws of the Association for the Improvement of the Poor (New York, 1844), p. 36; A.I.C.P., First Annual Report of the New-York Association for the Improvement of the Condition of the Poor for the Year 1845 with the Constitution, Visitor's Manual, and List of Members (New York, 1845), p. 14; A.I.C.P., Twelfth Annual Report for the Year 1855 (New York, 1855), p. 35. For a modern account of the founding of the A.I.C.P., see: Roy Lubove, "The New York Association for Improving the Condition of the Poor: The Formative Years," New-York Historical Society Quarterly, XLIII (1959), 307-327. Lubove seems unaware of the Association's relation to the city mission movement and in particular to the New York City Tract Society, seeing the A.I.C.P. as a "secular" response by New Yorkers to their city's growing poverty.

This organization has been the subject of some interest to social historians; scholars concerned with the evolution of American social work and class relationships have seen the Association as a crucially important proto-social welfare organization.[2] But to interpret the Association as in essence a pragmatic social innovation is to ignore much of its history. For it was the product as well of the gradual secularization of a two-generations long city mission effort. And in its own history, the Association thus demonstrates the ultimate significance of the city missions in helping shape the response of Americans to urban poverty.

In 1843, the New York City Tract Society founded the Association for Improving the Condition of the Poor. In so doing, the Tract Society gave birth to what was essentially a hybrid organization. The Association for Improving the Condition of the Poor was in some ways modeled after existing city missions, but with an avowedly secular goal--the moral and physical rehabilitation of the poor by means of the "scientific" distribution of charity. The

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[2]Lubove, "New York Association for Improving the Condition of the Poor"; Robert H. Bremner, From the Depths. The Discovery of Poverty in the United States (New York, 1956); Frank D. Watson, The Charity Organization Movement in the United States. A Study in American Philanthropy (New York, 1922); Rosen, Public Health; W. H. Tolman, "Half-Century of Improved Housing Effort by the New York Association for Improving the Condition of the Poor," Yale Review, V (1896-1897), 290.

leaders and workers for the Association clearly shared the spiritual commitment of the parent organization; indeed they had begun their charity work in its pious ranks. And though the Association's object was not formally the eternal salvation of men's souls, the moral and psychological views of poverty its leaders entertained were identical with those expressed by New York's city mission spokesmen.

Among these city missions, the New York Tract Society had, of course, the most direct influence upon the Association. It had created the Association as its secular arm and for the first generation of the Association's existence maintained the closest ties. Both institutionally and intellectually, the two societies found themselves in general agreement. Each viewed the distribution of temporal aid in much the same way; it was always a means, not an end. As the Tract Society had since the 1830's distributed temporal assistance in an effort to facilitate the conversion of the poor, so the Association--product of an increasingly pragmatic and moralistic age--used financial aid in hopes of inducing a somewhat more secular grace in the shape of a moral regeneration. Even the Association's relatively pragmatic involvement with matters of public health and medical care mirrored and paralleled interests already well-established in city mission circles.

Nor, as we have seen, was the New York City Tract Society able to return to an exclusively spiritual orientation.

Within a decade of the Association's founding, its parent organization was again deeply involved in the distribution of charity and the amelioration of slum conditions. Through the 1860's and indeed almost until the century's end, the City Tract Society and the Association worked hand in hand, united in their desire to make the poor self-respecting, economically stable, church-going members of society.

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During the half dozen years of hardship following the Panic of 1837, responsibility for aiding the poor and helpless fell heavily upon the New York City Tract Society. It was the only organization--aside from the municipal Almshouse--which sought to reach not one but all classes of New York's poor, and which possessed a staff large and experienced enough to administer relief throughout the city.

Especially during the winter of 1842-1843, the Tract Society's religious missionaries and visitors found themselves increasingly occupied with the simple distribution of food and clothing to the destitute and in paying the rent of those threatened with eviction.[3] Inevitably the Society's managers spent much of their time--as the minutes of their weekly meetings indicate--in discussing the temporal needs of the poor, in arranging for the efficient distribution of charity, and in seeking out philanthropists willing to underwrite these expanding relief activities.

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[3] Supra, Chap. VIII.

By the spring of 1843, the Society's Board of Managers had decided upon the need for a more systematic approach in dealing with these problems. "What suggestions," they asked their missionaries, "can we make as to the most efficient mode of ameliorating the condition of the poor, and detecting the frauds of impostors?" A month later, A. R. Wetmore, one of the City Tract Society's most active and generous supporters, conducted a survey of the opinions and experiences of New York's more than forty active charitable societies. Guided by the results of this survey, Wetmore soon decided that new arrangements would have to be devised. In mid-July, he turned for help to other prominent Tract Society managers--among them James Brown, Robert Minturn, and James Boorman--and with their advice drew up a draft constitution for a "Society for the Relief of the Worthy Poor." They immediately submitted this proposed constitution to the next weekly meeting of the Tract Society's executive committee, which voted promptly and affirmatively. Its Tract Society sponsors hoped that this new organization would free their still evangelical Society from the increasingly onerous burden of distributing charity and--hopefully--might ultimately even reduce the amount of destitution in the city. The Tract Society immediately hired a professional agent and dispatched him on a tour of other eastern cities; perhaps he might garner useful ideas from their modes of distributing relief.

For the next year and a half--from July, 1843, through December, 1844--the new organization remained the experimental brainchild of a number of the City Tract Society's wealthy supporters. Its founders made no immediate public announcement of its formation or request for contributions; the managers of the New York City Tract Society, at their own weekly meetings, actually directed and managed the new society. (Its affairs sometimes occupied the entire weekly executive committee meeting.) The Association recruited its members and financial support exclusively through the City Tract Society. It was almost two years before its founders felt that their neonate had developed a membership and financial base adequate to an independent existence.[4]

At the end of 1844, the New York Association for Improving the Condition of the Poor--the final form reached in the evolution of the Society's title--issued its first "Address to the Public."[5] The following year, the Association's members elected officers and a Board of Managers, and published their first report.[6]

Adopting the Tract Society's system of city-wide organization, the New York Association for Improving the

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[4]For material describing the actual formation of the Association and its early relationship to the N.Y.C.T.S., see: N.Y.C.T.S., "Minutes of the Missionaries' Weekly Meetings, February 24, 1838, to December 28, 1844."

[5]A.I.C.P., Address to the Public.

[6]A.I.C.P., First Annual Report, passim.

Condition of the Poor, like its parent society, divided the island into seventeen districts, corresponding to political wards. Each of these larger areas was subdivided into smaller districts to be supervised by five-man advisory committees.[7] These local committees were to divide their assigned territory into sections containing--ideally--some twenty-five poor families. It was the task of the district committee to recruit a requisite number of volunteers to work with each twenty-five-family unit. All charity distributed by the organizations was to be given on a personal basis; the visitor actually handed the food, or clothing, or fuel to the family whose guardianship he had assumed. No one connected with the Association--either as worker or contributor--was to aid any needy person directly; applicants for relief were to be referred to the visitor for the area in which he lived.[8] The heart of the visitors' work, therefore, lay in investigating each of his needy families and deciding upon the true origin of their plight; were they victims of unavoidable misfortune or of their own moral inadequacy? The visitor was supposed, as well, to familiarize himself with the city's numerous charitable organizations; if the needs of a particular family seemed appropriate to the purview of a particular agency, it was the visitor's duty

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[7]A.I.C.P., "Constitution, Article X and XI," printed ibid., pp. 8-10.

[8]A.I.C.P., "By-Laws, Article III and IV," printed First Annual Report, pp. 11-12, 19.

to act as liaison between that charity and its would-be object.[9]

The visitor's obligation to the poor of his district did not end with the simple distribution of material aid. Temporal aid was, indeed, simply a tool for the fulfillment of the visitor's more basic task. This lay in systematically returning to his assigned families, advising and admonishing them in regard to household management, in matters of industry and sobriety, in their religious habits. The visitor was to "extend to all such kind services, counsel, and assistance, as a discriminating and judicious regard for their present and permanent welfare require." Indeed, the Board of Managers often warned visitors that the poor could in many cases be best aided by withholding temporal aid, or by using it as a reward for abandoning such "vicious habits" as drunkenness and gambling. Charity must be regarded as only a stimulant, a means by which a temporary embarrassment might be overcome and a family enabled to join the ranks of the respectable and gainfully employed. It was only then that a visitor's responsibility ended.[10]

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[9]A.I.C.P., "By-Laws, Article III," p. 11. The A.I.C.P., as well, established its own depositories for food, clothing and fuel. Visitors could call upon them in providing immediate aid for their charges.

[10]A.I.C.P., "Constitution, Article II and XI"; A.I.C.P., Address to the Public, pp. 1, 7; A.I.C.P., "Visitor's Manual, Article III, VI, VII, VIII," printed First Annual Report, pp. 16-22, 25-32; A.I.C.P., Third Annual Report for the Year 1846 (New York, 1846), pp. 17-18; James Brown, "Confidential Instructions to the Visitors of the Association for Improving the Condition of the Poor, December 1, 1855," a four-page

In 1844, during its first year of independent operation, the Association extended its operations from the Battery to Fortieth Street (an area corresponding to sixteen of the city's seventeen wards). These were divided into 236 sections, each with its own visitors; within a year, the Association was able to add forty-two new visitors--and thus new sections--to its organization. At the same time it devised a number of practical ways in which to aid the poor more efficiently. It lent coal stoves, for example, to families too poor to have any place to burn their coal and devised a program for the orderly collection and distribution of used clothing and of what was then called "cold vittels," scraps from the tables of hotels and private homes.[11]

Each year the Association's workers were able to increase their efforts, to find their way into more and

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leaflet bound with "Minutes, Board of Managers of the New York Association for Improving the Condition of the Poor, February, 1850, to September, 1876," Archives, Community Service Society, New York City (the Community Service Society is a social work agency formed by the merger of the A.I.C.P. and the Charity Organization Society). All manuscript materials cited in this chapter, unless otherwise identified, are deposited in the Community Service Society's Archives. The A.I.C.P. visitor was required to see that no professional beggars, no dissimulators with adequate incomes, no criminals or drunkards imposed on the resources of the Association. "Black lists" of "sturdy beggars" were compiled by the advisory committees and distributed to the various districts and visitors. A.I.C.P., Third Annual Report, p. 19. Virtually every annual report of the Association during its first fifteen years discussed the problem of the professional beggar and the Association's success in detecting, if not reforming, them.

[11]A.I.C.P., Third Annual Report, pp. 16, 18, 21-22.

more slum apartments. In 1847, only three years after they had commenced their efforts, the visitors relieved some 5,500 families; this meant from five to six thousand visits a month.[12] By 1853, the Association's Tenth Annual Report could note with pride that it had succeeded in organizing twenty-two districts with the help of 378 visitors. Clearly, the Association submitted, this growth attested to the dimension of the problems they hoped to solve and to the enthusiastic support tendered by other New Yorkers.[13]

As its name implied, the Association had aims more ambitious than the simple rationalization of outdoor relief distribution. Its managers and workers hoped by applying "scientific methods" of philanthropy to reform the moral character of the poor and thus permanently reduce the amount of poverty in their city. They hoped by the same token to reduce proportionately the amount New Yorkers spent each year on charity.[14] The "scientific" quality of the Association's endeavor lay not only in their hope of bringing order into the city's philanthropic world or

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[12]A.I.C.P., Fourth Annual Report for the Year 1847 (New York, 1847), p. 26.

[13]A.I.C.P., Tenth Annual Report for the Year 1853 (New York, 1853), p. 32.

[14]A.I.C.P., First Annual Report, p. 14; A.I.C.P., Eighth Annual Report for the Year 1851 (New York, 1851), pp. 17-18; A.I.C.P., Tenth Annual Report, pp. 31-32.

in espousing as it did such pragmatic reforms as tenement house legislation and medical dispensaries (though all were of recognized importance). It rested principally on the assumption that a moral reawakening of the poor might be guaranteed by a systematic and uncompromisingly realistic application of the methods prescribed by "modern philanthropy." And, as we have seen, the Association never doubted that upon such moral regeneration all true economic and social reform must be based. Private and public charity, the Association asserted after several years' work, could not even begin to support all of the city's needy. Only the moral elevation of the poor themselves offered an ultimate solution for the city's relief problems.[15]

Consistently enough, the Association emphasized this individualistic and moral approach to poverty in their first visitor's manual. The writer of these instructions was the Association's first agent, Robert M. Hartley, already an experienced leader in New York's charities. Their ultimate purpose, Hartley instructed the new volunteers, was "to induce persons to prefer a life of labor to dependence upon alms. . . . We are bound to relieve none, as a general rule

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[15]A.I.C.P., Thirteenth Annual Report for the Year 1856 (New York, 1856), pp. 36-37, 39; A.I.C.P., Seventh Annual Report for the Year 1850 (New York, 1850), pp. 16-17; A.I.C.P., Eleventh Annual Report for the Year 1854 (New York, 1854), p. 18; A.I.C.P., Twelfth Annual Report, pp. 25-35, 37; A.I.C.P., Nineteenth Annual Report for the Year 1862 (New York, 1862), pp. 20-21.

whom we cannot elevate."[16] For this reason, the Association refused--at least formally--to help the elderly, the chronically ill, and the handicapped, as well as the morally irredeemable. Such unfortunates were the proper objects of the Alms-House; they could never be made self-supporting, productive members of society. The purpose of the Association, Hartley instructed visitors time and again, was to elevate and morally reform the poor, not simply to aid the hungry or the sympathetic. "The Constitution," he admonished in 1847, "allows relief only to those whose moral and physical condition will be improved by the amount of attention and relief, the visitor in the proper discharge of his duties will be able to bestow."[17]

The decisions demanded by this policy could be made only by the knowing and sensitive. The visitor must be in

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[16]A.I.C.P., "Visitor's Manual, Article VIII," pp. 30-31.

[17]Robert M. Hartley, An Abstract of the Secretary's Remarks at a Special Meeting of the Advisory Committees of Visitors of the Association for Improving the Condition of the Poor, New-York, March 3, 1847 (New York, 1847), pp. 2-3, 5; Hartley, To the District Secretaries and Visitors of the New York Association for Improving the Condition of the Poor, May, 1850 (New York, 1850); Hartley, To the District Secretaries and Visitors of the New York Association for Improving the Condition of the Poor, January 15, 1855 (New York, 1855); Hartley, To the District Secretaries and Visitors of the New York Association for Improving the Condition of the Poor, February, 1857 (New York, 1857); Brown, Confidential Instructions . . . December 1, 1855 (New York, 1855). All the above were printed circulars sent to visitors by the secretary or president of the Association; all are deposited in the Archives of the Community Service Society. Hartley's directives did not meet with universal compliance. Some visitors protested, arguing that if they did not care for the sick and the elderly, these dependents would starve; the city agencies were simply unable to care for all the genuinely needy and deserving.

effect a true friend of the needy family. If vice lay at the root of their misfortune, he must persuade them to reform through moral and religious instruction and by withholding aid; if victims of sickness, he was to obtain medical aid and, through the judicious provision of relief, keep the family above the level of pauperism until health and the possibility of employment returned. If want could be traced to lack of skills, the visitor was to seek jobs and training for his charges. The worst sin of all, visitors were warned, lay in allowing the aid they gave to undermine existing stores of self-reliance and morale. Financial aid should be regarded both by visitor and client as only a desperate and in a real sense degrading last resort.[18]

In the intricate mixture of values and attitudes which motivated and justified the Association, the strain of would-be efficiency, of "scientific philanthropy," played, as we have suggested, a significant part. The Association felt, indeed, that its potential clients were as much the city's numerous though disorganized charities as the poverty-stricken objects of their mutual concern. Hartley and his colleagues sought the education and reorganization of New York's charities in terms of modern philanthropic practice--detection, discrimination,

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[18]A.I.C.P., "Visitor's Manual, Article VI," pp. 29-30; A.I.C.P., First Annual Report, passim; A.I.C.P., Eleventh Annual Report for the Year 1854 (New York, 1854), p. 39; A.I.C.P., Fourth Annual Report, p. 12.

visitation. New York, the Association reiterated in its early reports, possessed over forty charitable organizations, all actively distributing relief to the poor. Besides these private groups, the city government supported an alms-house, a juvenile reformatory, and a department of outdoor relief. Yet each year the numbers of the poor increased and their condition seemed only to worsen.

The principal cause of this unfortunate situation, the Association argued, lay in the inability of simple good will to solve such problems; order and disciplined understanding were absolute necessities. Many of these organizations did not seek to morally reform the poor, but simply to feed and clothe them. The result was moral disintegration and inevitable pauperization. As an indispensable first step, the Association submitted, the city's numerous charitable organizations should divide the poor into categories reflecting the essential cause of their condition. Second, these organizations should take care not to duplicate efforts and thus subsidize the wily dissimulator. Last, aid should be given only in connection with systematic visitation and efforts to secure a moral reformation. Few of these organizations, the Association reported, thoroughly studied all the needs of their clients; comparatively few followed up their aid with constructive moral criticism, with religious instruction, with advice on child-rearing or efficient household management. Such admonitions were

of far greater value to the poor themselves than a few pounds of coal or some cast-off clothing.[19]

Characteristic of New Yorkers' indiscriminate charity was their traditional practice of giving alms to street beggars or food and clothing to those who begged from door to door. The charitable thus neglected the needy whose self-respect would not allow them to accost strangers in the streets. And often, of course, these sturdy beggars were simply frauds. But in any case, such random and ill-considered giving was never accompanied by advice, sympathy, or pious encouragement. "Impulsive benevolence," Hartley wrote in 1848, "is selfish, indolent, indiscriminating, and generally produces evil."

> To make want the sole measure of supply, without regard to character, conduct or consequences, is to subvert temperance, economy and industry, and to encourage pauperism with its attendant evils. . . . The chief cause of its /pauperism's/ increase among us in the injudicious dispensation of relief.[20]

The Association's system of district visiting would completely eliminate street-begging. An Association member,

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[19]A.I.C.P., First Annual Report, pp. 15-16; A.I.C.P., Third Annual Report, pp. 15-16; A.I.C.P., Sixth Annual Report for the Year 1849 (New York, 1849), pp. 14-24; A.I.C.P., Seventh Annual Report, pp. 29-30; A.I.C.P., Eighth Annual Report, p. 25; A.I.C.P., Tenth Annual Report, pp. 17-19, 21.

[20]A.I.C.P., Fifth Annual Report for the Year 1848 (New York, 1848), p. 15; A.I.C.P., "Minutes of the Board of Managers, November 11, 1851"; Horatio Allen, To the Visitors of the New-York Association for the Improvement of the Condition of the Poor, February, 1846, a leaflet, n.p., n.d., Archives; A.I.C.P., First Annual Report, p. 17; A.I.C.P., Third Annual Report, pp. 16, 19; A.I.C.P., Fourth Annual Report, p. 17; A.I.C.P., Eleventh Annual Report, p. 35.

when approached by a beggar or asked for food or clothing at his home, would simply give the solicitor a ticket directing him to the visitor for the section in which he lived. The visitor need never again have to deal directly with a stranger; the fraudulent beggar would be driven from the streets, the honest poor cared for in their homes and encouraged in their self-respect. And not least, available funds would go much further. By just such judicious reforms the Association hoped ultimately to eliminate pauperism and reduce poverty itself to manageable dimensions.[21]

.2.

Organizations are sometimes--in truth--the lengthened shadow of one man. This was clearly the case with the Association for Improving the Condition of the Poor. For the first generation of its existence, the Association expressed with consistent faithfulness the ideas and leadership of Robert M. Hartley. In 1843, the executive officers of the New York City Tract Society hired Hartley as "agent" and executive secretary of their new Association, one of the first salaried executive positions in American philanthropy. For more than two decades Hartley was both key policy-maker and day-to-day administrator of the Association's work. He did not retire until 1876.

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[21]A.I.C.P., "Constitution, Article XI and XII"; A.I.C.P., First Annual Report, pp. 17-18; A.I.C.P., Third Annual Report, pp. 16-19; A.I.C.P., Fourth Annual Report, pp. 16-17.

With remarkable fidelity, Hartley's career mirrors all of the tendencies which we have sought to illustrate in preceding chapters: the transition from evangelical piety to secular moralism, from tract distribution to temporal meliorism, the growth of professionalization within the missions, the casual and intimate coexistence of spiritual and material concerns. The influences which shaped Hartley were the influences--disparate though they may seem in hindsight--which gave shape to the city mission movement generally. Hartley's ideas were not original; both in his activities and writings he mirrored the interests of many other Americans concerned with social reform in the 1830's and 1840's.[22]

Robert Hartley was born in England in 1796 and came to the United States as a three-year-old with his merchant father. Like his father, young Hartley went into business, beginning as a clerk in upstate New York, then making a mercantile career of his own in New York City. But as in the case of many of his fellow New Yorkers, the competitive urgings of commerce did not fill his life. As early as 1822, Hartley assumed leadership in his Presbyterian church's

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[22]For a discussion of Hartley and the public health movement, see Charles E. Rosenberg and Carroll S. Rosenberg, "Pietism and the Origins of the Public Health Movement: A Note on John H. Griscom and Robert M. Hartley," Journal of the History of Medicine, in press. For evaluations of Hartley's place in the development of American social welfare, see Bremner, From the Depths; Watson, The Charity Organization Movement; Lubove, The Progressives and the Slums. Tenement House Reform in New York City. 1890-1917 (Pittsburgh, 1962).

program of ward tract visiting, working closely with Harlan Page, soon to be one of the New York City Tract Society's most influential members. Hartley soon joined and played an active role in several of the city's other benevolent societies. Throughout the 1820's and '30's he played a leading role in the work of the New York City Tract Society. In 1829 he joined the newly organized New York State Temperance Society and in 1833 became its corresponding secretary and agent. Ten years later Hartley resigned his business career to assume a full-time position as executive secretary of the Association for Improving the Condition of the Poor.[23]

Thus well before the Association's organization, Hartley had become familiar with New York's social problems and committed to a number of institutional programs which were to strongly influence the new organization. Hartley, for example, as chairman of his ward's temperance committee, had urged that the New York Temperance Society institute a program of systematic visitation, so as to ultimately contact every family in the ward. He was convinced as well that the Temperance Society should work in conjunction with the city's other charitable associations. Hartley was also an advocate of total abstinence--unlike some of the less earnest among his associates--and was convinced that the "sin" of

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[23]Memorial of Robert Milham Hartley. Edited by his Son, Isaac Smithson Hartley, D.D. 1882 (Utica, 1882), Chaps. I-X. This memorial is the basic biographical source for Hartley's life, containing as it does voluminous excerpts from his letters, diary, and other unpublished manuscripts.

intemperance lay behind much of the nation's social disorder and individual misery;[24] this theme was to assert itself constantly during the Association's first half century of life.

Through his temperance work as well, Hartley became involved with public health problems well before the establishment of the Association. New York's dismayingly high infant mortality rate was a problem which concerned anyone who bothered even to glance at such statistics--and Hartley soon became aware of the role played by contaminated milk in contributing to these alarming death rates. Hartley was particularly shocked by the discovery that a good portion of the city's milk supply came from animals kept closely confined in filthy and poorly ventilated stalls--and, worst of all, fed on distillery wastes. Hartley led other like-minded reformers in a campaign against this swill-milk, a campaign culminating in a formal investigation in 1858.[25] It takes no great sophistication to discern the moralism, the temperance thrust in this overtly pragmatic concern; and one could indeed make a good deal of the dramatic function played by images of pollution, of unnatural

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[24] Ibid., pp. 89-94, 98-104.

[25] An Historical, Scientific and Practical Essay on Milk as an Article of Human Sustenance; with a Consideration of the Effects Consequent upon the Unnatural Methods of Producing it for the Supply of Large Cities (New York, 1842); Memorial, Chap. IX.

alcohol defiling God's pure milk.[26] The most significant point, however, is that such distinctions--between that which we regard as pragmatic environmentalism and that which we regard as pious or status-oriented moralism--are not very useful ones. Both styles of thought supplemented each other, interacting to motivate and broaden Hartley's concern with the human problems of his city.

Not surprisingly, Hartley shared his generation's assumptions about the nature and origins of poverty. There were, he believed, essentially two classes among the needy, the victims and the vicious, the worthy and the unworthy. And, as we have seen in discussing the Association's visiting policies, an intelligent application of these standards was the logical basis for the Society's plan of organization. Overlying this rather negative analysis of poverty was an ineradicable--if somewhat inconsistent--optimism; it was the heritage of Hartley's millennial piety.

No individual, he believed, need ever become or remain a pauper. Pauperism was not a category in an analysis of

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[26]For an important discussion of the background of such images of "infection" and the gradual and complex secularization of this concept, see: Owsei Temkin, "An Historical Analysis of the Concept of Infection," in Studies in Intellectual History (Baltimore, 1953), pp. 123-147, esp. pp. 139-144. See also the discussion of the interaction between scientific thought and religious values provided by Lloyd Stevenson in two significant articles, "Science Down the Drain. On the Hostility of Certain Sanitarians to Animal Experimentation, Bacteriology and Immunology," Bulletin of the History of Medicine, XXIX (1955), 1-26, esp. nn. 3-4, and "Religious Elements in the Background of the British Anti-Vivisection Movement," Yale Journal of Biology and Medicine, XXIX (1956), 125-127.

income distribution, but a moral state. "The masses," Hartley explained in the Association's Annual Report for 1856, "beginning with the individual, are improvable. And if the individual can be reclaimed, why not the masses?"

> Until the feelings, opinions, and practices of the great mass are governed by sound principles and Christianity pervades and renovates the habits of social and civil life, there is no reliable foundation for prosperity.[27]

And the means through which this goal might be attained served as its own motivation: "The supernatural efficacy of Christianity is adequate to the work."

These were the strongest bonds of continuity between the city missions and the Association--the motivating optimism of Christian commitment coupled with the conviction that the only real solutions for pauperism were ultimately moral. Hartley transmitted all of these attitudes to his new organization.[28]

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[27]A.I.C.P., Thirteenth Annual Report, p. 39.

[28]Another connection between the A.I.C.P. and the city mission movement can be seen in the influence exerted upon both by Thomas Chalmers, noted Scottish divine. Chalmers, it will be recalled, was the formulator of an elaborate system of slum visiting and moral exhortation aimed at reducing urban poverty. Supra, Chap. III. It was hardly surprising that Robert Hartley and his A.I.C.P. should have so frequently echoed the ideas and programs of Thomas Chalmers. Again the thread of continuity--one might call it a genealogy--between Chalmers and the Tract Society, between the Tract Society and Hartley, between Hartley, the A.I.C.P., and its successor, the Charity Organization Society, is unmistakable. The elements of piety, of moral censoriousness and the worship of efficiency were present at all times; it was simply their relative proportions which changed with succeeding generations.

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But though the Association assumed that individual moral failings were the most important single cause of poverty, they did not limit their efforts to personal visiting and secular sermonizing.

Environmentalism had always coexisted with moral interpretations of want; and from the moment of the Association's organization, it became increasingly involved with environmental reform. Hartley and the Association's managers assumed the existence of an intimate connection between the breakdown of living standards--a result of impersonal economic forces--and the deterioration of individual and family mores. Specifically, the Association concerned itself with programs to study and improve the health and housing of New York's poor. In part, these programs reflected city mission workers' growing awareness of tenement conditions--an awareness based in large measure on experience and observation. These new melioristic programs reflected as well the influence of Edwin Chadwick, Southwood Smith and other English public health reformers, an influence as pervasive in the 1840's and '50's as that of Thomas Chalmers in the generation past.[29]

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[29]It would be inappropriate to discuss the English public health movement here--for it has been the subject of a number of excellent studies. See, as but a few examples: W. M. Frazer, A History of English Public Health 1834-1939 (London, 1950); R. A. Lewis, Edwin Chadwick and

The Association for Improving the Condition of the Poor inherited its interest in public health and in the conditions of tenement life from its founders, the managers and visitors of the New York City Tract Society. As early as 1835 and 1836--that is, even before the Panic of 1837 had pressed an awareness of poverty upon the consciousness of New Yorkers generally--the Tract Society's visitors had begun to criticize slum landlords and to attribute much of New York's poverty and crime to the degrading conditions of the city's tenements. By the early 1840's the City Tract Society's regular missionaries had become known as perhaps New York's most knowledgeable authorities on tenement life. The minutes of the Tract Society's Board of Managers' meetings in the months immediately preceding the founding of the Association contain frequent references to the living conditions of the poor and to plans for their alleviation.[30]

During these years the New Yorker most active in calling for public health reform was a Quaker physician, John H. Griscom. Not surprisingly, Griscom was a member of the first executive committee of the Association--and

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the Public Health Movement 1832-1854 (London, 1952); S. E. Finer, The Life and Times of Sir Edwin Chadwick (London, 1952); Royston Lambert, Sir John Simon, 1816-1904 and English Social Administration (London, 1963); C. Fraser Brockington, Public Health in the Nineteenth Century (Edinburgh and London, 1965); M. W. Flinn, "Introduction," in Edwin Chadwick, Report on the Sanitary Condition of the Laboring Population of Great Britain, ed. by M. W. Flinn (Edinburgh, 1965). For the decisive impact of the English public health movement upon American reformers, see Rosen, Public Health, pp. 233-248.

[30]Supra, Chaps. IV and VIII.

urged with unceasing conviction the moral benefits to be gained from public health reform.[31] (Griscom's father, it should be noted, was a leading organizer and worker in New York charities during the first half of the century.) I have already mentioned Griscom's historic analysis of New York's health problems in his 1842 report as City Inspector and his even more famous address on the "Sanitary Condition of the Laboring Population of New York" prepared two years later. Both reports were heavily dependent--as were public health investigations of the 1850's and '60's--upon the observations of Tract Society visitors.[32] It is impossible to define precisely the role of Griscom's work in precipitating the Tract Society's decision to inaugurate the Association, but it is certainly safe to argue that both were characteristic products of a period increasingly concerned with such matters as tenement construction, sanitation, and dispensary care.[33]

The early 1840's marked the first real quickening of New Yorkers' awareness of slums and of their effect on public health and morals. (Earlier moments of alarm were

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[31] A.I.C.P., First Annual Report, pp. 4-5.

[32] Supra, p. 261 .

[33] In ideas, in actions, in associations--Griscom consistently displayed the pietistic origin of his concern for public health. Indeed, in 1845, a reviewer of Griscom's Sanitary Condition, in the New York Journal of Medicine, actually suggested by way of conclusion that it be reprinted and distributed by the N.Y.C.T.S. New York Journal of Medicine, IV (1845), 30.

connected with the fear of epidemics--cholera in 1832 and yellow fever in 1822, for example--and no longer-lived than the disease itself.) The tone of newspaper articles discussing such matters became increasingly alarmed as knowledge of slum conditions became more widely diffused, and as epidemics and the rumor of epidemics dramatized the threat which such misery posed to every class in New York. In 1849, the two-year-old American Medical Association sponsored an investigation into health and housing accommodations in New York as part of a more general survey of American cities.[34] That same year, Lemuel Shattuck completed his influential report as chairman of the Massachusetts Sanitary Commission; published in 1850, the Report emphasized the painful disparity between Boston's high mortality rate and that of the state's rural areas. The impact of the Shattuck Report was equally sharp in New York--for New York's mortality rates were substantially higher than those of Boston.[35]

As early as 1846, only two years after the Association for Improving the Condition of the Poor had begun independent life, its directors voted to establish a committee to examine the housing of the poor.[36] The next year, the committee

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[34]American Medical Association, First Report of the Committee on Public Hygiene.

[35]Lemuel Shattuck and Others, Report of the Sanitary Commission of Massachusetts, 1850. With a Forward by Charles-Edward Amory Winslow (Cambridge, Mass., 1948).

[36]A.I.C.P., Third Annual Report, p. 22.

issued its report; not surprisingly, their observations and conclusions paralleled those made by Griscom in New York and those which Chadwick, Southwood Smith, Neil Arnott, and their fellow public health workers had formed while studying England's new industrial slums. The city's tenements were utterly inadequate to the preservation of human life--much less Christian morality. The Association's housing committee concluded by warning the Association firmly: if they hoped to reduce the amount of poverty in the city and improve the morals of the poor, they must first reform tenement conditions.

> Great value should be attached to this much-desired reform, seeing it lies at the basis of other reforms; and as the health and morals of thousands are injured or destroyed by the influence of circumstances around them, an improvement of the circumstances in connection with other appropriate means, afford the only rational hope of effectively elevating their character and condition, and of relieving the city from numerous evils which now exist.[37]

Moral considerations were still an inextricable part of the concerns of even the most environmentally oriented. Indeed, this approach to housing contained elements even more simplistic and optimistic than its moral formulae for the relief of urban poverty. Housing abuses could be easily corrected--or so at least it seemed in 1847. They stemmed from the unethical practices of a group of marginal and unethical businessmen, the slum landlords. The solution was obvious. Substantial merchants, guided by traditional

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[37]The committee's report was printed in the A.I.C.P.'s Fourth Annual Report, pp. 22-23.

business ethics and Christian principles, must be drawn into the housing field. They, more even than the city missionary, would be the moral reformers of the poor.[38]

Decent housing for the poor, the Association's housing committee insisted, could be constructed and still bring a legitimate profit to the builder; six per cent could easily be realized on a sanitary and well-maintained multi-unit dwelling. The housing committee drew up and printed model housing plans which the Association's officers distributed widely among the city's business leaders in the hope of inspiring a new kind of tenement landlord. The success of a number of such projects in England and on the Continent provided encouragement.

But events in New York did not. Few substantial businessmen responded to the Association's housing report. Tenements built during the 1840's proved no better than the old reconstructed tenements in the city's lower wards.[39] The Association began to consider the construction of its own model tenements but was unable to raise the necessary funds. In 1853, they decided upon the need for a new and more vigorous program. Largely at the instigation of Hartley, the Board of Managers appointed a second housing committee and directed them to prepare a report on "the sanitary condition of the laboring classes and the

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[38] Ibid., p. 23.

[39] See, for example, remarks in A.I.C.P., Tenth Annual Report, p. 27; A.I.C.P., Eleventh Annual Report, pp. 20-21.

practicality of devising measures for improving the comfort and healthiness of their habitations."[40]

The committee, able to call upon the observations and reports of their own visitors and the paid missionaries of the City Tract Society, presented a detailed ward-by-ward and section-by-section description of slum housing conditions in New York. They investigated in depth the largest and worst of the city's tenements and reported whole city blocks lined with ill-ventilated, filthy, and overcrowded buildings. The connection between such conditions and the city's high rate of crime and mortality seemed all too apparent. This report, a model of lucidity for its time, remained for decades a specific guide for American housing reformers and public health workers. The Association published an edition separate from their 1854 Annual Report--where it had originally appeared--and circulated it widely among physicians, business groups, and the press.

The poor, the committee argued with casual indifference to the Association's still-dominant tone of moralism, "are made filthy, reckless and vicious by the force of circumstance over which in most cases they have no control." "Every honest, sober and industrious resident," it concluded, "should at least have it in his power to procure a decent and healthy home for himself and family. This is now impossible to multitudes who dwell in this city." For the

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[40]A.I.C.P., "Minutes, Board of Managers, June 13 and October 10, 1853."

first time, New York philanthropists were in a systematic way expressing the belief that some of their citizens--no matter how pure their morals and prudent their domestic management--would never live in decent surroundings.[41]

Pauperism, alcoholism, immorality, even indolence and sickness were products of the slum--as much as they were a cause of slum conditions. In its Annual Report for 1854 the Association accepted and emphatically endorsed the view of poverty taken by its 1853 housing committee. As we have already seen with Hartley's own report, the Association was chronically--and perhaps necessarily--inconsistent in evaluating the roles played by morality and environment in the causation of anti-social behavior. Citations could easily be marshalled emphasizing either their continued moralism or earnest environmentalism. The point, of course, is that the inconsistency was never a real one in the minds of the Association's workers and leaders; common sense seemed to endorse the validity and interrelationship of both. If the reformer were to improve the poor morally, physically, socially, or economically, the Association's officers stated in their Annual Report, he must first destroy the slum. While the poor remained in their accustomed tenement homes, they would turn to alcohol, have little interest in industry, economy, or cleanliness, be sickly, and die young. Children would inevitably

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[41]A.I.C.P., First Report . . . Sanitary Condition, pp. 3, 6-14, 20, 26-27.

follow in their parents' degraded footsteps. There could be no escape for succeeding generations until the housing conditions which bestialized the poor were remedied.[42]

To speed that day and to convince the city's respectable landowners and merchants to enter the housing field, the Board of Managers voted in 1853 to begin the construction of a model tenement house for the poor.[43] Located between Mott and Elizabeth streets, just north of the Five Points, the building when completed in 1855 was rented exclusively to Negroes. "The reason for selecting this class of tenants," the Association Managers explained, "is that they are usually forced into the worst kind of dwellings, and are deprived of most special privileges, and consequently were specially deserving commiseration."[44]

The Association attempted to correct all the abuses of the standard slum tenement. Water closets, while not in the apartment itself, were on the same floor and specifically assigned to each apartment. Each apartment had as well a supply of Croton water. The common halls were lit by gas; every apartment was assigned a storage area in the basement in which supplies of coal and food could be kept. The yard was to be kept exclusively for washing

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[42]The A.I.C.P.'s Eleventh Annual Report, pp. 19-33, included a lengthy discussion of the environmental causes and social nature of poverty and urged immediate public health and tenement house reform.

[43]A.I.C.P., "Minutes, Board of Managers, April 10, 1854."

[44]A.I.C.P., Thirteenth Annual Report, p. 46.

and drying. Each family had two bedrooms to preserve privacy; subletting was prohibited.[45]

Yet the apartments were pitifully small. The bedrooms each measured but eight feet by seven and a half feet, the living room fourteen by eleven. And except for end apartments, all rooms save the living room were dark and windowless. The Association felt that ventilating flues running between each room and the roof would eliminate the need for windows and thus allow an increased number of apartments on each floor. Yet as the history of the Workingmen's Home, as it was called, was to prove, the flues were no substitute for windows. A number of years would pass before New York builders devised a satisfactory blueprint for low-cost urban dwellings which would allow for both proper ventilation and a profitable number of apartments. The Association's more general expectations for their model home failed as well. Maintenance costs for a building housing 87 families were high and tenants were not always cooperative. In 1867, they sold the building for $100,000 to the Five Points House; it was to serve as a home for working women.[46]

As it became increasingly clear in the years after 1854 that private capital was not going to follow the

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[45]The A.I.C.P. included in their Thirteenth Annual Report a detailed description of the Workingmen's Home including an artist's sketch and floor plans, pp. 45-51. For a modern discussion and analysis of the Home, see Robert H. Bremner, "The Big Flat. History of a New York Tenement House," American Historical Review, LXIV (October, 1958), 54-62.

[46]Bremner, "Big Flat," p. 56.

Association example and rebuild New York's tenements, the Association turned with increasing interest to the police and regulatory powers of both the municipal and state governments.[47] In 1856 and 1858, the Association lobbied in Albany to secure the appointment of special legislative committees to investigate health and housing in New York City.[48] Association members, city missionaries, interested physicians all testified to the foul slum housing of the city and its baleful effects upon health. The legislative committees, convinced, recommended a radical series of regulatory housing laws, which fully accorded with the Association's demands and those of other public health advocates. Yet another decade was to pass before the New York State legislature passed what was--for the time--a model tenement house code, the Housing Act of 1867.

The Association thus experimented with two solutions to the tenement house problem, private model dwellings and state regulation. Nearly a century would pass before Americans would turn to a third solution, government construction of low-income housing. The Association's experiments hold

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[47]The Association, its officers wrote in 1857, had worked for ten years to achieve housing improvements through the use of private capital and philanthropic appeals. But to no avail. Only the police powers of the state, they were now convinced, could change slum conditions. They called for the state legislature to condemn defective buildings, establish regulations concerning the proper construction of new buildings, to require the city government to improve sewerage and drainage. A.I.C.P., Fourteenth Annual Report for the Year 1857 (New York, 1857), pp. 30, 36-37.

[48]A.I.C.P., Thirteenth Annual Report, pp. 42-45; A.I.C.P., Fourteenth Annual Report, p. 17.

an important place in the housing and public health movement of the nineteenth century. Equally significant was their explicit recognition that poverty often resulted from, and was perpetuated by, conditions beyond the control of the poor. Poverty was a social as well as an individual dilemma--one justifying even the intervention of the state into private affairs.

The Association did not limit its meliorative efforts to matters of housing. The provision of medical care was another related and long-standing concern of the Association. No sooner indeed had the Association been founded than it began to investigate the health of the poor and the adequacy of the medical care available to them. In 1845, even before the appearance of its first annual report, the Association published "A Plan for the Better Distribution of Medical Attendance . . .," calling for an increased outpatient care.[49] Within six years, the Association established two new medical dispensaries (located in the new slums which ran north of Fourteenth Street along the East and Hudson rivers). Association visitors worked closely with dispensary physicians, bringing them to the sick poor and even distributing medicines from central depositories.[50]

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[49]A.I.C.P., A Plan for the Better Distribution of Medical Attendance and Medicines for the Indigent Sick by the Public Dispensaries in the City of New-York (New York, October, 1845), Archives, Community Service Society.

[50]A.I.C.P., Eighth Annual Report, pp. 20-22; A.I.C.P., Ninth Annual Report for the Year 1852 (New York, 1852), pp. 38-39.

Throughout the 1850's and 1860's, the Association continued to concern itself with the practical health needs of the poor. In 1852, the Association opened a Bath and Wash House, where for a minimal charge (imposed to prevent the pauperization of its users) the poor could bathe and wash their clothing. This was New York's first public bath.[51] In 1862, the Association established a Society for the Ruptured and Crippled which operated a hospital largely to aid laborers injured during work (a common and, the Association asserted, a clearly preventable cause of poverty).[52] And in 1862, as well, the Association at last won a state law regulating the production and sale of milk--a victory which came after two decades of lobbying and agitation by Robert M. Hartley.[53] During these same years the Association also supported such general public health efforts as the movement to improve the city's sewer system, to regulate slaughtering houses and bone-boiling establishments, and to prevent farm animals from being stabled in tenement apartments. It fought with increasing urgency and final success to secure an effective and professionally staffed Metropolitan Board of Health.[54]

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[51]A.I.C.P., Ninth Annual Report, pp. 39-40.

[52]A.I.C.P., Nineteenth Annual Report, pp. 38-43; Memorial, pp. 212-215.

[53]A.I.C.P., Nineteenth Annual Report, pp. 54-58.

[54]A.I.C.P., Fifteenth Annual Report for the Year 1858 (New York, 1858), pp. 53-54; A.I.C.P., Seventeenth Annual Report for the Year 1860 (New York, 1860), pp. 57-68; A.I.C.P., Nineteenth Annual Report, pp. 16-18; Hartley, "Summary of the

Its historians have, in recent years, tended to write of the Association for Improving the Condition of the Poor's leaders in somewhat disenchanted tones; the moralism and rigidity of the Association's expressed values have made it seem natural to interpret the organization's concern for the poor as a form of moral censure and social control. Yet at the same time it has seemed natural to praise the Association and its leader, Robert M. Hartley, for a pioneer involvement in such social problems as tenement house reform and public health legislation generally. The place of the Association and Hartley in the evolution of the social welfare case-work method and in the incipient professionalization of social work is also unquestionable.

There is, of course, no real irony here; the ambiguity is only apparent. Once we accept the pietistic orientation of the Association's leaders as valid and genuine, the seeming inconsistency disappears. Christian faith can be an idiom for the expression of social criticism as well as a motivation toward personal piety and evangelicalism; that those who chose to do good seem to us moralizing and socially conservative does not invalidate the genuineness of their commitment. (And it is, of course, hardly surprising that the brutal facts of tenement life made its victims and their style of life repellent and menacing to the Association's

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Accomplishments of My Tenure of Office," in Mr. Robert Hartley's File of Original Documents, Archives, Community Service Society. (From internal evidence it appears that this "Summary" was probably written in 1876.)

middle-class supporters. More important is the strength and resilience of these reformers' commitment to helping their fellow New Yorkers--brutish though their personal habits may often have seemed.) And, it may well be argued that this particular mixture of seemingly inconsistent elements--of pious moralism and dedicated environmentalism--was the most characteristic aspect of both social welfare and public health reform in the decades between the Civil War and the twentieth century. This peculiar mixture of pragmatism, moral self-assurance, and pious commitment was a very American and not completely ignoble compound.

In the development of contemporary attitudes toward poverty and institutions for its amelioration, the city missions of nineteenth-century America played a significant role. Many of their ambivalences and inconsistencies remain with us. More positive is their contribution in familiarizing Americans with urban poverty and their place as institutional vehicles for the gradual secularization of the activist, reforming spirit of Jacksonian evangelicalism. Their spirit is unmistakably present in much later and even self-consciously secular and rationalistic generations.

APPENDIXES

Appendix A

The founders and early supporters of the New York Religious Tract Society were drawn from every portion of New York's religious orthodoxy. Their careers suggest that during the opening years of the century there was no practical inconsistency between active evangelicalism and consciously orthodox Calvinism. John Mitchell Mason, for example, long an active manager of the Religious Tract Society, was for a time pastor of the First Associate Reform Church of New York. The Associate Reformed Church had been established by Scotch Presbyterians who sought to remain untainted by even relatively mild defections from rigid Calvinism; they remained carefully separate from New York's other orthodox Presbyterians. John Mitchell Mason ultimately left the Associate church to join the Presbyterian church, yet remained throughout his life the representative of a segment of New York society intensely orthodox in theology and highly conservative in matters social and political. Mason at the same time, however, maintained the closest of ties with a number of evangelical societies. He was the principal founder of the New York Missionary Society, of the American Bible Society, the Society for Evangelizing the Jews, and the United Foreign Missionary Society. He founded and edited, as well, the missionary

Christian's Magazine. (Sprague, Annals of the Pulpit, IV, 1-26.)

The Reverend Philip Milledoler, president of the Religious Tract Society in 1812, the year of its founding, represented an equally orthodox wing of New York Calvinism. He had been ordained by the German Reformed synod of New York and from 1813 to 1825 served as first professor of theology and later as president of Rutgers College. At the same time, Milledoler was perhaps New York's most successful revival preacher, having led frequent revivals at his Rutgers Street Presbyterian Church between 1805 and 1813. (Charles Edwin Corwin, Manual of the Reformed Church in America. (Formerly Reformed Protestant Dutch Church) 1628-1922 (New York, 1922), pp. 628-630.)

John Romeyn, for years a vice president of the Religious Tract Society, had, like Milledoler, been ordained by the Reformed Church and was known throughout New York City as a highly effective revival preacher. Romeyn was, as well, associated with most of New York's evangelical societies and led many of his parishioners to missionary work. (Sprague, Annals of the Pulpit, IV, 216-224.) For discussions of other prominent New York ministers connected with the Society such as Gardiner Spring, Philip Whelpley, and Samuel H. Cox, see above, Chap. III.

A large proportion of the Society's lay managers were active in the evangelical societies of the period. Among

these were the New York Sunday School Union, the New York Bible Society and the New York Auxiliary Bible Society, the Society for Supporting the Gospel Among the Poor of New York, and the New York Marine Bible Society. Their wives were in many cases active in the New York Female Auxiliary Bible Society and the Female Missionary Society for the Poor of New York. Two excellent examples of this life of pious and orthodox activism were Divie Bethune and John D. Keese. Divie Bethune, a Scotch emigré and prominent New York merchant, with his mother-in-law, Isabella Graham--probably John Mitchell Mason's two most famous parishioners--displayed a lifelong devotion to both Calvinist orthodoxy and evangelical zeal. Divie Bethune, a devout member of the First Associate Reformed Church of New York, attracted by the orthodox preaching of John Mason, John Mitchell Mason's father, was a founder and active lay member of the New York Religious Tract Society. He was as well an active member of the Society for the Support of the Gospel Among the Poor of New York, the Young Men's Missionary Society of New York, numerous foreign missionary societies, the New York Bible Society, the American Bible Society, the American Home Missionary Society, the New York and American Sunday School Union, as well as being an active member of the New York Religious Tract Society. Indeed, it was Divie Bethune and his wife, Joanna Graham Bethune, who founded the first religious Sunday school in

New York City, seeing it as an ideal way to bring religion to New York's disadvantaged children. (Bethune, "Life," Graham, Power of Faith.)

John D. Keese, active in a number of New York's religious philanthropies during the opening years of the nineteenth century, represented a theological position only a bit less rigorous than Bethune's Scotch Presbyterianism. Keese was a staunch member of the conservative, Calvinistic wing of the New York Presbytery. As such he bitterly opposed Samuel H. Cox's appointment as missionary of the Young Men's Missionary Society of New York, an organization he had helped found. It was Keese, moreover, who first brought formal charges of heresy against Gardiner Spring, charges which led to Spring's heresy trial on the charge of Hopkinsian deviations from true Calvinism. Yet Keese was sufficiently influenced by the evangelical spirit of the age--in his practical actions if not in his formal beliefs--to help found the Young Men's Missionary Society to save souls both along the frontier and in his city's own slums, and to be active in such other evangelical organizations as the New York Sunday School Union, the New York Bible Society, and later the American Bible Society and American Tract Society. (See Gardiner Spring's comments on Keese in his Personal Reminiscences.)

A study of the membership and officers of the Religious Tract Society over a number of years reveals several interesting trends. One was the general shift within New York

philanthropy from the secular to the religious, and, secondly, a gradual movement within Presbyterian circles from orthodox Calvinism towards liberal Hopkinsianism. Between 1812 and 1815, many aged and philanthropic New Yorkers, for example, Henry Rutgers, Richard Varick and Leonard Bleecker, men active for years in New York's secular charities, served as managers of the Religious Tract Society. Side by side with them were such highly orthodox Calvinists (but at the same time convinced evangelicals) as John Mitchell Mason, Alexander Green, John Romeyn, William McMurray, and John D. Keese. After 1816, however, more liberal Calvinists, such as Gardiner Spring, Whelpley, Anson Phelps, and Lewis Tappan, began to join the Society and be elected to office. By the 1820's, these liberals, both lay and clerical, assumed an ever more prominent role in the Society's management (a development symbolized by the election of Gardiner Spring as president).

Appendix B

For a full understanding of the evangelical movement in the first quarter of the nineteenth century, one must look at the ideas, not simply of a few prominent theological innovators, but at other, more representative religious leaders, men who both spoke for and influenced a broad segment of their fellow Americans. Though often unaware of any drift from orthodoxy, Americans tended, in these first decades of the nineteenth century, to move increasingly toward a theology which justified their emotional commitment to action--one seemingly more congenial to the realities of American life.

I have therefore selected six New Yorkers to illustrate this development, individuals prominent in the city's religious and reform world in the years between 1790 and roughly 1832. They are Gardiner Spring, Isabella Graham, Divie Bethune, John Stanford, Anson G. Phelps and Ezra Stiles Ely. Although less prominent in the canon of historical writing than Lyman Beecher, Nathaniel Taylor, or Horace Bushnell, to name a few religious leaders who have been subjects of modern historical works, in their generation they were highly respected and influential. They represent a broad spectrum of theological views, from Associated Reform Calvinists, through Baptists and liberal Hopkinsians, to supporters of

Lyman Beecher and Charles Grandison Finney. All were active in a wide range of national missionary and evangelical societies: the American Bible Society, the American Sunday School Union, the New York Religious Tract Society. They were active as well in local missionary groups, in organizations for the distribution of charity and religious literature to the city's poor, in secular charities as well.

How did these representative religious leaders justify such unceasing missionary zeal in terms of the Westminster Confession which they all formally accepted? Their public and private writings indicate that consciously or subconsciously these six (and presumably they are but representative of many other religious New Yorkers) had gradually moved away from an emotional commitment to their continued formal acceptance of man's total depravity, of the inefficacy of human action, and of the discriminating nature of Christ's atonement. They seemed to believe, without necessarily stating it in formal terms, that God wished to save all men and that He expected His saved Christians to exert their utmost energies towards converting others. They--and with them, American religious thought generally--were moving unconsciously but irrevocably towards the modified Calvinist position soon to be adopted by Charles Grandison Finney. Since these six were founders and long-time personal supporters of the city mission movement, their ideas provide an excellent method of clarifying the relation of the city mission movement to the ideas

and events of the Second Great Awakening generally, and to the evangelical movement specifically.[1]

For half a century, Gardiner Spring had served as a symbol of orthodox Presbyterianism to his fellow New Yorkers. As a young man he had been chosen in 1810 to assist and then succeed that patriarch of New York Presbyterianism, John Rodgers, as pastor of Brick Presbyterian Church. For the next sixty-three years, Spring, increasingly influential, remained as pastor of this eminently respectable church. During the 1820's he emerged as the leader of New York orthodoxy, taking up the challenge made by Nathaniel W. Taylor's New Divinity to traditional Calvinism. After the defection of Lyman Beecher, Gardiner Spring

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[1]In recent years a number of monographs have appeared analyzing the various evangelical reforms of the period: Clifford S. Griffin, Their Brothers' Keepers, Moral Stewardship in the United States, 1800-1865; Charles I. Foster, The Evangelical United Front, 1790-1837; and John R. Bodo, The Protestant Clergy and Public Issues, 1812-1848, among others. These studies have tended to view the evangelical movement in social, rather than religious terms. They have, that is, principally seen the religious enthusiasm of the evangelicals as in good measure a means of social control. Certainly social and political conservatism forms an important element in the evangelical movement. Socialists, Fanny Wrighters, agrarian reformers, joined working men's parties or Tom Paine societies, not the American Bible Society. But it is a mistake to overemphasize such conservatism. It was not a narrowly self-serving motive nor, really, a principal object of the evangelical societies, but rather an expression of universal and unquestioned values. The evangelicals felt no sense of conflict between selfless pietism and a desire for the control of behavior. They never questioned the assumption that piety brought with it social stability or that social stability promoted piety.

organized and led Eastern conservative Presbyterian opposition to Charles Grandison Finney and his revivals. Indeed, when some of his own parishioners sought to bring Finney to New York, their bitterest opponent proved none other than their pastor, Gardiner Spring.[2] Finally, when the Presbyterian Church divided into Old and New School factions in 1837, Spring, with regrets, led his congregation into the conservative anti-revival Old School wing.

In the opening decades of the nineteenth century, however, few figures were more familiar to evangelistic and philanthropic New Yorkers than the recording secretary of the New York Evangelical Missionary Society of Young Men and one-time missionary to the city's almshouse, Gardiner Spring. Spring was a founder and remained an active member of such national evangelical societies as the American Bible Society, the American Home Missionary Society, and the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions. From 1826 through 1828 he served as a member of the executive committee of the American Home Mission Society. On a local level he assumed an active role in the endeavors of the New York Sunday School Union and the New York Religious Tract Society. Naturally, he grew familiar with New York's slums and the temporal and religious needs of the city's poor. The first sermon he preached in New York was in support of

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[2]McLoughlin, Modern Revivalism, pp. 50-53; William Russell Hoyt, "The Religious Thought of Gardiner Spring, with Particular Reference to his Doctrine of Sin and Salvation" (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Duke University), pp. 72-73.

Isabella Graham's Society for the Relief of Poor Widows with Small Children; his first year in the city was spent preaching to the poor of the almshouse. His wife served as a directress of the Female Missionary Society for the Poor of the City of New York, and Spring himself organized charity Sunday schools and gave his support to a charity day school. He served for many years as a director of the African Free School. Throughout his long career he was an enthusiastic supporter of societies that sought revivals, the conversion of all Americans, and the coming of the millennium.[3]

Why would so orthodox a Calvinist be active in such evangelical societies? Why would he help found a society that believed its missionaries capable of truly aiding God in His war with the devil and sin? Calvinism, it would seem, had undergone important changes during the Second Great Awakening. The early career of Gardiner Spring can, I think, provide a number of insights into the nature of these changes.

An evaluation of the quality of any professed Calvinist's thought in this period revolves necessarily about his attitude toward three central theological issues: total depravity, limited atonement, and the inefficacy of human action.

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[3]Hoyt, pp. 42-69; Spring, A Sermon Preached April 21, 1811, for the Benefit of a Society of Ladies, instituted for the Relief of Widows with Small Children (New York, 1811); Spring, Personal Reminiscences, II, 216; Female Missionary Society, Second Annual Report, 1818, list of officers.

Gardiner Spring, and indeed our five other New Yorkers, show clearly the centrality and interrelation of these problems.

Gardiner Spring, throughout his career, but especially in the years surrounding the War of 1812, was a Hopkinsian, strongly influenced by the writings of Samuel Hopkins, Joseph Bellamy and Timothy Dwight.[4] Spring was a native of Congregationalist New England and had attended Congregational Yale College. He was in fact the grandson of Samuel Hopkins. His father, Samuel Spring, was the leader of Massachusetts Hopkinsians.[5] Gardiner Spring thus grew up in a community committed to revivals and to the belief that conversion was a highly conscious and profoundly moving

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[4]It is Hoyt's thesis that Gardiner Spring's theological career can be divided into three phases, an early Hopkinsian phase extending from his conversion by Timothy Dwight into the early 1820's, a second period when, at least in part as a response to pressure by orthodox Calvinists in New York City, Spring took an anti-revival position and finally joined the Old School during the schism in the Presbyterian church (it was during this period that Spring became a leader of orthodox opposition to Finney, Beecher and Taylor), and a final liberal phase entered near his death. On the whole, Hoyt leaves these shifts unexplained. One possible factor in Spring's opposition to Beecher-Finney revival theology might have been a sense of competition between Spring and Finney for leadership of Eastern revival Presbyterianism.

[5]Gardiner Spring's father, Samuel, was a founder of the Massachusetts Missionary Society, of the Massachusetts Missionary Magazine and of Andover Theological Seminary. He helped as well to win over New England Congregationalists to support of the American Bible Society and helped establish the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions and the American Home Mission Society. Spring was a leading Hopkinsian, and had studied under Hopkins, Joseph Bellamy and Stephen West. Frederick T. Persons, "Samuel Spring," Dictionary of American Biography, ed. by Dumas Malone, IX (1936), 481-482.

experience. He attended Yale College, moreover, from 1800 to 1805, at the height of Timothy Dwight's great revivals, in the midst of his crusade to rid Connecticut of atheism and Republicans, and at the beginning of Dwight's campaign to establish voluntary reform societies. Spring was deeply influenced by Timothy Dwight and indeed as a personal convert of Dwight felt himself to be the Yale president's spiritual son. As late as the 1860's, he referred to Dwight as "my beloved and venerated teacher. . . ."[6]

Spring brought with him to New York two New England Congregational "heresies," a belief in man's natural ability, and an emotional as well as doctrinal commitment to revivals, preparation, and means. The first he inherited from his father and grandfather, the second he had both learned and experienced as a student of Timothy Dwight.

Orthodox Calvinists insisted that Adam's fall totally corrupted all of man's natural attributes. Reason became twisted by self-interest, conscience, will and understanding clouded and inoperative. Hence man's natural inability to know God or obey His commandments. New Englanders, however, during the eighteenth century had chipped away at this view of a totally debased human nature. Led by Samuel Hopkins

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[6]Spring, Personal Reminiscences, I, 160. During these years, Spring's connections with the New England Hopkinsians were quite close. When, for instance, Spring, whom the orthodox Presbyterians in New York City had accused of Hopkinsian theological errors, was acquitted at a heresy trial, Lyman Beecher wrote offering his enthusiastic congratulations. Spring, Personal Reminiscences, I, 138-139.

and Edward Bellamy, and later by Timothy Dwight, New England Congregationalists had asserted that Adam's fall had weakened but not destroyed man's nature. Man still clearly possessed the faculties of reason and understanding. His reason could still tell him of God's existence and Christ's promises. What man lacked, following the fall, was not the natural ability to know God, but the moral ability to choose God and, for His sake, to reject the corruptions and pleasures of the world.[7] Hopkinsians were not Arminians. They believed that salvation still depended on God's merciful reconstruction of man's nature--but not so much of his reason and understanding as of his will and conscience. The conversion experience gave man the moral ability to choose God and throw himself upon Christ's promises and mercy.[8] The leading spokesman of Hopkinsian doctrines in New York during the second and third decades of the century was Gardiner Spring.[9]

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[7]In the theological usage of the day, natural ability was identified with man's cognitive faculties, reason and understanding, for example, while moral ability referred to man's volitional attributes, will and conscience.

[8]Joseph Haroutunian, Piety Versus Moralism, the Passing of the New England Theology (New York, 1932), presents a standard description of Hopkinsian theology. H. Shelton Smith, Changing Conceptions of Original Sin (New York, 1955), discusses much of this material in his chapter, "The Federal Doctrine of Original Sin." See also Mead, Taylor, passim.

[9]See Gardiner Spring's forceful exposition of the doctrine of natural ability and moral inability in his sermon on the death of his colleague and friend, Philip Whelpley, A Funeral Sermon Occasioned by the Death of the Rev. Philip Melanchthon Whelpley. Pastor of the First Presbyterian Church in

The doctrine of natural ability and moral inability or culpability held many implications and assumptions quite relevant to the evangelistic tendency of the Second Great Awakening. The first was an insistence upon God's goodness and His concern for the good of His creatures. Preoccupied with God's majesty and holy otherness, High Calvinists of the eighteenth century had acquiesced to the damnation of infants and imbeciles, indeed of the majority of mankind. God was unknowable; His will was the essence of justice. Thus they remained unmoved by the taunts of Unitarians and Universalists, that only an autocratic and unjust God would create men with corrupted natures and then damn them because of their innate depravity.[10]

But liberal Congregationalists of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries such as Hopkins, Bellamy, Dwight, Taylor, and the young Gardiner Spring were determined to prove that God did not damn ruthlessly, that He was concerned with the happiness and the best interests of His creatures. "'God is love,'" Spring wrote in an early attempt to present Hopkinsian doctrines to New York's

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the City of New-York. Preached in that Church, on the 26th Day of July, 1824, together with an Address Delivered at His Funeral, p. 5, and in Spring's The Doctrine of Election Illustrated and Established in a Sermon, preached on the Evening of the Second Lord's Day, in December, 1816 (New York, 1826), pp. 1-5. It was indeed largely because of his exposition of the doctrine of natural ability that Gardiner Spring was tried for heresy before the New York Synod. Spring, Personal Reminiscences, I, 131-135.

[10]Haroutunian, Chaps. III and VI.

Calvinists. "It is not part of the doctrine of Election," he continued, "that God created a part of mankind merely to damn them. . . . In itself, he desires the salvation of every living man. We have his oath 'that he has no pleasure in the death of him that dieth.'"[11] Their increasing emphasis upon God as the benevolent father subtly weakened orthodox Calvinism's assumption of a limited atonement. Those damned, Spring and all Hopkinsians believed, richly deserved their fate, because of their moral obstinacy and aversion to God.[12] Yet implicit in the writings of the Hopkinsians, especially of Dwight and the young Spring, was the hope that as few as possible would be damned, as many as possible saved. "It has never yet been proved that Christ died exclusively for the elect," Spring wrote elsewhere in his Sermon on the Doctrine of Election. "If language has any meaning we are bound to believe that he tasted death for every man." By this Gardiner Spring did not mean that he believed all men to be saved. But he did mean that the inclusive nature of Christ's redemptive act made it possible for every man to be saved. This was clearly a change in emphasis from Old New England Calvinism, certainly from orthodox

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[11]Spring, The Doctrine of Election, p. 4.

[12]In the writings of Hopkinsians and their liberal descendants this delicate balance of emphasis often became somewhat tortured. Spring, in his sermon on the Doctrine of Election, had no sooner asserted that "God is love" and wished "the salvation of every living man" than he quickly added a classic Hopkinsian passage: "If he destroys the wicked, it is because their perdition is inseparable from the promotion of his own glory and the highest good of his kingdom. . . .," p. 4.

Presbyterianism as practiced in New York. Spring, in deliberately introducing this new emphasis, demonstrated his hope, perhaps even his conviction, that if God's redemptive act included all mankind, possibly all, or at least a great number of mankind, could be saved. Thus the possibility, indeed, the necessity, of man's action.[13]

Thus Spring's, and other Hopkinsians', insistence on man's natural ability not only transformed their concept of God, it changed, as well, their view of man and of the process through which he was saved. Man with natural ability was a far different creature than the debased, finite sinner of orthodox Calvinism. He had reason and conscience. He knew right, even if he could not force himself to choose the right. And with reason and conscience he could take a few tentative steps toward finding God on his own. Although they still insisted that salvation could only come after the Holy Ghost infused grace into the human soul, Hopkinsians began to flirt with ideas of human means and human actions. Man, capable of knowing God and Christ, could pray to God for salvation. He could study the Bible, lead a good life, attend prayer meetings and revivals. He could seek after God and salvation. He could even, Gardiner Spring asserted in 1824, "wake up /his/ soul." In a funeral sermon for his friend and associate, Philip Whelpley, Spring chided Whelpley's First Presbyterian congregation for failing

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[13]Spring, Doctrine of Election, p. 5.

to respond to their late minister's frequent calls for a revival, implying that the sinner could, to use a term later made famous by revivalist Charles Finney, "make himself a new heart." Certainly, as Spring continued, it was clear that he felt the sinner could act, could turn to God of his own volition and seize upon the salvation that Christ wished to give to all mankind.

> Why shall not the death of your minister prove the profitable epoch, from which you shall date the commencement of happy immortality, and angels shall rejoice in your adoption into the family of the redeemed? I do entreat you, wake up your souls to this momentous concern now. . . . I beseech you, be prepared for another and a better world. O do not consent to live, and die, and be entombed, and at last summoned to the bar of judgement, without an interest in the crucified, risen, reigning, redeeming Saviour! . . . I beseech you . . . to become reconciled to God.[14]

By the use of this concept of natural ability, a concept in fact developed earlier by Jonathan Edwards, Spring and the other liberal Hopkinsians modified the doctrine of election in order to defend their Calvinist God against the enlightenment's accusations of despotism and cruelty. But the emphasis that emerged and that moved their congregations was not so much the intellectualistic compromise of natural ability modified by moral inability, but an emphasis upon the power of man to know God and to

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[14]Spring, A Funeral Sermon . . . Rev. Philip M. Whelpley . . ., pp. 30, 28. The unavoidable feeling one gets from Spring's sermons is that the great majority of men had in the past been damned, but that in the future, this proportion might perhaps be reversed.

actively seek salvation. Even in their own writings this emphasis is clear. To return again to Gardiner Spring's Doctrine of Election, it is easy to see the gradual transition in the minds of pious Americans in the early 1800's between natural ability and human efficacy. "The inability of the non-elect," Spring wrote giving a classic Hopkinsian definition of moral inability, "to comply with the terms of the gospel, arises from their unwillingness to comply. Their inability is of a moral, and not a physical nature. . . ." But from this statement Spring continues, "It is not part of the Doctrine of Election that the non-elect will not be saved if they do as well as they can. . . . Let the non-elect do their duty and they will be saved. Nay let them possess one holy desire and they will be saved. . . . Not one non-elect will be lost, unless he persist in impenitence, reject the offers of mercy to the last, and die in his sins." Spring, clearly, still clings to orthodox Calvinism--at least in proportion to his assumption that the non-elect will persist in their rejection of God. But since the non-elect possess natural ability, the hope is that they will ultimately accept Christ's offer of mercy, that they may, in actuality, be among the elect. This same almost unconscious movement from natural ability to human effort is equally clear decades later, when Spring wrote in his autobiography:

> I do not now say the sinner can repent if he will, because the assertion implies an unholy volition produces holiness, yet I still maintain that his

> duty stands abreast of his intellectual powers, and his faculty of moral discernment. If he is capable of sin, he is capable of holiness; else he is under no obligation to repent and believe the Gospel. . . . Those pulpits that teach that it is impossible for unrenewed men to repent and believe the Gospel, rarely urge this duty upon the impenitent, and never with the earnestness with which it is urged in the world of God.

The implication is clear enough: all men must urgently and continually try. Even the elect. Even those who hopefully believed themselves to be saved, Spring insisted, had to show definite signs of sanctification, of an actively holy life. "It is no part of the doctrine of Election, that the Elect will be saved let them do what they will. The immutable law of the divine kingdom has made personal holiness essential to eternal life."[15]

Thus Spring's insistence upon man's natural ability and Christ's inclusive atonement lead inevitably to an assertion of human efficacy. If man could prepare his soul for the infusion of grace, if man could plead for andwin salvation, then it was the duty of the true Christian to urge all sinners to seek God and to prepare their souls. This was the minister's true role. Spring defined the Christian minister as "one, who by the influence of his preaching, prayers, and example, shall excite you to love to God--who by his discretion, fidelity and vigilance shall

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[15]Spring, Doctrine of Election, pp. 5-6. Spring, Personal Reminiscences, I, 136-137. See also Spring, A Sermon Preached April 21, 1811 for . . . the Society . . . for the Relief of Widows with Small Children, for Spring's emotional emphasis on human works.

strengthen and build up in the holy faith this ancient Zion. . . ."[16] Indeed in the light of the nineteenth century's concern for the salvation of others, Samuel Hopkins' disinterested benevolence took on additional meaning. Where in the eighteenth century it had simply meant man's love for the rest of mankind, by the 1810's and 1820's it carried with it the conviction that this love could best be shown in vigorous missionary activity. How better to show one's love for one's brothers than to seek their eternal salvation, to tell them of the importance of preparation and prayer? Hence the vital need to send ministers to sinners, to distribute Bibles and tracts, to hold prayer meetings and, hopefully, to lead revivals. Means opened the gates to human efficacy which in turn justified this generation's characteristic evangelical and missionary drive. If Man could seek out God's grace, and if God did desire the salvation of all men, then missionaries could hope to aid God in His combat for the souls of men. As Spring's close associate, Philip Whelpley, told the United Foreign Missionary Society:

> It is the design of every man's conversion, not only that his own soul, but that of others--all to whom he can extend the influence of the gospel, should be saved. . . . A man needs but to be converted to God--to be a Christian in heart,

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[16]Spring, A Funeral Sermon . . . Rev. Philip M. Whelpley . . ., p. 28.

> in order to become an efficient agent--a worker together with Christ in the conversion of the world.[17]

Indeed the Christian who did not labor for the salvation of all was suspect. "The Gospel insists upon works as a necessary manifestation of faith," Gardiner Spring told the supporters of Isabella Graham's Society for the Relief of Poor Widows with Small Children; "no man will be saved on account of his personal righteousness; but no man will ever be saved without personal righteousness. . . . The simple fact is, that the faith of the Gospel, and the works of the Gospel, necessarily and inseparably co-exist. FAITH AND GOOD WORKS ARE INSEPARABLY CONNECTED."[18]

Gardiner Spring's intellectual inheritance from Samuel Hopkins, from his own father's writings and from Timothy Dwight and Lyman Beecher thus helped him defend and

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[17]Whelpley, A Sermon Delivered in the Murray Street Church, New-York, in Behalf of the United Foreign Missionary Society, May 11, 1823 (New York, 1823), pp. 17, 12. This was not an abstract statement, but an argument for missionary zeal--directed even towards the conversion of New York City's own "heathen" poor. For Whelpley's sermon continued: "That gospel is ours to bestow. We are made its depositories and we have been brought under its saving influence, in order that we might become the almoners of heaven, in making that gospel 'the power and the wisdom of God' to the salvation of the world. . . . I repeat it therefore;--the Heathen must perish if we do not send them the gospel. . . . And you need not go far to find specimens of the heathen world. . . . You may begin your survey from the threshold of this sanctuary, and pass through the heart and the suburbs of this city, where are multitudes of Heathen. . . .," pp. 20-21, 18-19.

[18]Spring, A Sermon Preached April 21, 1811 for . . . the Society . . . for the Relief of Widows with Small Children, pp. 3-4.

justify revivals. But his commitment to them was far deeper and more emotional. Had he not found God during one of Dwight's great Yale revivals? During the first few years of his New York pastorate, Spring felt his sermons uninspired and pedantic and his congregation spiritually dead. A revival had never taken root in Brick Presbyterian and its members were accustomed to moralistic, improving sermons. Yet Spring had grown up in communities where successful ministers led revivals and where men were deeply conscious of their own conversion (or the lack of it). As he recalled later, he would often remain alone in his church long after his sermon fearing that his congregation would reproach him for what they must realize was "my heartless preaching."[19] By early 1814, Spring had begun actively to work for a revival in his church. He held special prayer meetings and lectures, met with groups of anxious parishioners in private homes, pointed his sermons towards the need of a conversion experience and even refused to baptize the children of parents who had not had such an experience.[20] Under this pressure, in 1816, Brick

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[19]Spring, Personal Reminiscences, I, 161.

[20]Ibid., I, 124-129; Hoyt, "Gardiner Spring," p. 17; Shepherd Knapp, pp. 184-187. One example of the series of sermons Spring preached during his early ministry actively encouraging an immediate revival at Brick was Something Must Be Done, A New Year's Sermon Preached on the Last Day of the Old Year. A later even more emotional and zealous sermon was the one he preached at Whelpley's funeral, A Funeral Sermon . . . Rev. Philip M. Whelpley.

experienced its first revival. And indeed revivals were frequent at Brick in the years between 1816 and 1834.

Both minister and congregation asserted that this first revival, and, indeed, the subsequent ones, resulted from the free visitation of God's mercy. "God was already beginning a precious work of grace among the people. He had taken it into his own hands and was conducting it in his own quiet way, convincing the church and the world that it is 'not by might, nor by power, but by his own spirit.'"[21]

Yet it was more a revival in the tradition of Timothy Dwight than of Dwight's grandfather, Jonathan Edwards. It grew out of Spring's conscious desire for a revival. It was based on his belief in means, in the sinner not waiting passively, but seeking God and beseeching His grace. This was, after all, the minister who wrote during his heresy trial that sinners must be strongly encouraged to use means to seek God's grace. Even at the end of his long career Spring still criticized those Calvinist ministers who did not urge their congregations to search for God and to yearn for salvation. "Those pulpits that teach that it is impossible for unrenewed men to repent and believe the Gospel, rarely urge this duty upon the impenitent, and never with the earnestness with which it is urged in the word of God."[22] Spring urged the deacons and elders of his church

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[21]Spring, Personal Reminiscences, I, 162.

[22]Ibid., p. 137.

to visit throughout the congregation, questioning as to the state of the various members' souls, warning those who seemed to be violating the teachings of morality, encouraging those who feared damnation, urging "the anxious" to greater diligence in seeking God.[23] And, not surprisingly, a number of Spring's parishioners, along with their pastor, were extremely active in the city's missionary and millennial societies.[24] If human efficacy could save souls at Brick, it could save them throughout the city, the country and the world.

Yet Hopkinsian New Englanders were not alone among Calvinists in asserting that man could and should aid God in converting sinners. In 1816 that highly orthodox Scotch Presbyterian emigree to New York City, Divie Bethune, wrote:

> We must work for, as well as pray for, the blessings which God has promised to bestow on our sinful race. We must put our shoulder to the wheel, whilst we look up to heaven for assistance, and God will always bless those who are found in the path of duty.[25]

Bethune, prominent New York merchant and philanthropist, his wife, his mother-in-law, Isabella Graham, were members of New York's First Associate Reformed Church, attracted by the orthodox preaching of John Mason and his son, John

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[23]Shepherd Knapp, p. 189.

[24]Among others at Brick, besides Spring himself, active in a broad range of evangelical societies, and especially in city missions, were Anson G. Phelps, Moses Allen, Robert C. Cornell, Samuel Osgood, Rensselaer Havens.

[25]Bethune, "Life of Isabella Graham," Power of Faith, p. 57.

Mitchell Mason. The Associate Reformed church had been established by Scotch Calvinists who wished to keep their church untainted by the relatively mild defections from rigid Calvinism practiced by New York's orthodox Presbyterians. The Bethunes and Isabella Graham thus represented a far more conservative wing of American Calvinism than did the young Gardiner Spring.

Yet they joined with him in ardent missionary work, seeking actively to save souls both along the frontier and in their adopted city. Divie Bethune was an active member of the Society for the Support of the Gospel Among the Poor of New York, the Young Men's Missionary Society of New York, numerous foreign missionary societies, the New York Religious Tract Society, the New York Bible Society, the American Bible Society, the American Home Missionary Society, the New York and American Sunday School Union. Indeed, it was Divie Bethune and his wife, Joanna Graham Bethune, who founded the first religious Sunday school in New York, seeing it as an ideal way to bring religion to New York's disadvantaged children.[26]

Isabella Graham was as active as her son-in-law in seeking to bring religion, and even salvation, to the city's poor. With her daughter, Joanna Bethune, she established charity day schools and Sunday schools in the city's poorer wards. Mrs. Graham personally gave religious instruction

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[26]Rice, Sunday School Movement.

to children attending the city's free schools and spent part of each day visiting the poor in their homes. She distributed Bibles and religious tracts, prayed with the poor, urged many to join churches and persuaded the city's regular ministers to visit among the poor for the purpose of converting and instructing them.[27]

How did Isabella Graham and the Bethunes harmonize this religious activism with their orthodox Calvinism? Why did the same organizations and causes attract unbending Scotch Presbyterians as well as New England Hopkinsians? Had the millennialism and revival enthusiasm of the Second Great Awakening eroded, in practical matters, even Scotch Presbyterians' adherence to the logical consequences of their rigid Calvinist faith?

In 1816, a few months after her death, Divie Bethune published a carefully selected group of Mrs. Graham's religious and charitable correspondence, covering the period 1789 to 1814. He prefixed it with a highly pietistic biographical sketch. The volume was reprinted several times, once by the American Tract Society for distribution, and soon became a popular piece of devotional literature. Presumably it presented accurately the theological beliefs of the Bethunes and Mrs. Graham, and as well those of a broad range of New York Protestants.[28]

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[27]Bethune, "Life of Isabella Graham," pp. 46-60. See also Harris Elwood Starr, "Isabella Marshall Graham," Dictionary of American Biography, VII, 474-475.

[28]This was Graham, Power of Faith.

As this correspondence amply proves, Mrs. Graham held a thoroughly orthodox view of man's corrupt nature. Unlike Spring's subtle distinctions between man's reason and his heart, Mrs. Graham insisted that Adam's fall had thoroughly corrupted man's nature and that this fallen creature fully deserved God's infinite anger. "All are guilty and vile alike," she wrote a friend, "the whole head is sick, the whole mind unsound." Salvation for such a creature must come completely from God. "No worthiness of yours can give you a title to that New Testament in Christ's blood, which was shed for the remission of sins. Worthless, vile, empty, helpless, is every son and daughter of Adam's race. . . .," Isabella Graham wrote a friend in 1800.[29] "You may strive, and resolve and vow--," she cautioned another, "all will not do: you lie at his mercy for holiness, as well as pardon. . . . He works all our works in us, and without him we are not equal to one good thought."[30]

Yet each day Mrs. Graham went among the poor urging them to pray, to read their Bibles and attend church. Isabella Graham's God was a God of mercy. All men might deserve damnation, but a loving God wished to save as many as possible. God as she saw Him was, "The Lord, the Lord God,

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[29]Isabella Graham to Miss M--, November 2, 1800, Power of Faith, p. 359.

[30]Isabella Graham to P--, March, 1799, Power of Faith, p. 278.

merciful and gracious, long suffering, slow to anger, of great kindness, showing mercy to thousands, pardoning iniquity, transgression and sin--. . . . None ever sought him in vain, or found him worse than his promise."[31] Clearly so hopeful a statement implies at least a commitment to the possibility of unlimited atonement. This atonement still proceeded from Christ's death, not from man's worth or actions, but it was an atonement which opened the possibility of heaven to all who desired salvation. Her view of salvation, while quite different from the Methodist's, was indeed in some ways as broadly conceived as Wesley's Free Grace.

> God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him might not perish, but have everlasting life: for God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world, through him might be saved. . . . When man becomes convinced that he is lost, helpless, wretched, lying at mercy and submits to the method of God's own providing; casts himself on the mercy of God in Christ, and coming to him, rests on his free promise, Him that cometh to me, I will in no wise cast out; disclaiming all confidence in himself, or in his own works, he accepts of God's offered Grace, in God's own way, a FREE AND FINISHED salvation.[32]

The following month she wrote the same correspondent:

> It was for the ungodly that Christ died: it was while we were without strength: his name was called Jesus, because he should save his people from their sins. In that day, that great day of the feast,

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[31]Isabella Graham, January 4, 1801, Power of Faith, pp. 360-361.

[32]Isabella Graham to Miss M--, September 11, 1800, Power of Faith, p. 354.

> Jesus stood among a mixed multitude, and cried, if any man thirst let him come to me and drink--whosoever will, let him come and take of the water of life freely.[33]

While insisting upon an orthodox view of justification as a free gift of God, Isabella Graham subtly and casually altered orthodox Calvinism. Sixteenth and seventeenth century Calvinism acquiesced in the damnation of most men. Isabella Graham acquiesced in the damnation of none. "I do not find in all God's Bible, anything requiring us to look at, far less acquiesce in, the final destruction of any, for whom we have prayed, pleaded and committed to him. . . . he hath set no bounds to his own mercy . . . he had made provision for the chief of sinners."[34] She clearly believed that God wished to save all sinners and that, at the same time, He demanded that individual Christians play a role in the salvation of others. God would save sinners if sincerely beseeched by true Christians. Such a theological point of view opened the floodgates to human action. No longer need the believing Calvinist passively observe the arbitrary justice of an all-powerful God. He could now pray in the hope that God's justice might be tempered with mercy.

Isabella Graham's view of means complemented and furthered this idea of unlimited atonement. Salvation,

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[33]Isabella Graham to Miss M--, November 2, 1800, Power of Faith, p. 359. See also Isabella Graham to P--, September 26, 1805, Power of Faith, p. 290.

[34]Isabella Graham to Miss G-- Y--, n.d., Power of Faith, p. 306.

by the end of the eighteenth century, had become a slow, tortuous process, but a process, Isabella Graham insisted, which God facilitated by providing the sinner with appropriate means or aids.[35] Indeed Isabella Graham believed, God worked through means to save the sinner. The sacraments, the Bible, Communal prayer, ministers and pious friends were all means to salvation, sources of grace for the sinner in his often lengthy conversion experience.[36] Hence the urgent need for Christians to go out among the ungodly as agents of God and promoters of salvation. A Bible given to a poor widow, a sinner encouraged to attend a sermon, a wavering soul urged to take the sacraments, a child instructed in the Bible, might indeed, with God's assistance, be the beginning of a conversion or saving experience.

But God not only promised that a life of Christian or missionary action might indeed be efficacious, He required that every saved Christian lead a life of such pious activism. Indeed, active benevolence played a pivotal role in Mrs. Graham's view of the salvation process. For to her orthodox concept of salvation or justification, she added a

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[35]Isabella Graham to P--, February 10, 1797, March, 1799, and November 28, 1804, Power of Faith, pp. 276, 278-279, 287-289; Isabella Graham to Miss --, November 2, 1800, Power of Faith, p. 359.

[36]Isabella Graham to P--, December 22, 1801, January 14, 1800, and March, 1811, Power of Faith, pp. 285-287, 297; Isabella Graham to Mrs. Juliet S--, September 16, 1808, Power of Faith, pp. 365-367.

somewhat less orthodox emphasis upon the idea of sanctification. God saved the sinner in a single act of His will or mercy; this is the traditional Calvinist "FREE AND FINISHED salvation." But this justification only gradually affected the Christian's behavior and earthly life; it affected it only insofar as he cooperated with it and struggled to effect the change that God had made possible in his life. In the act of salvation, the sinner was of necessity passive. But in the long years that followed, he must actively struggle to achieve the sanctified life of the true Christian. "I am called to . . . watch, strive and fight," Mrs. Graham wrote to her daughter and son-in-law. "Life is given; means of support and growth provided . . . all things necessary to life and godliness; these are promised to the diligent use of means; and poverty, stagnation, discomfort, threatened to the indolent."[37] And how could the Christian better please God than by devoting himself to saving others and preparing for the millennium?[38]

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[37]Isabella Graham to Joanna and Divie Bethune, May 26, 1802, Power of Faith, p. 337. See as well Isabella Graham to Eliza Van Wyck, 1810, Power of Faith, p. 371, and Isabella Graham to Mrs. Juliet S--, September 16, 1808, Power of Faith, pp. 366-367.

[38]As Isabella Graham wrote her daughter in 1801, "I pray the Lord may make our dear D.[ivie] an instrument among others of spreading his Gospel, building up his Church, and pulling down the strong holds of Satan: and that you may be in your place a help meet for him, in this as in every thing else." Isabella Graham to Joanna and Divie Bethune, December 26, 1801, Power of Faith, p. 331.

This commitment to a sanctified life of active benevolence was by no means unique to this small but zealous Scotch Presbyterian family. Such ideas had begun implicitly and explicitly to affect the thought of other New Yorkers still orthodox in formal commitment; Ezra Stiles Ely and John Stanford, for example, were both closely associated with the Bethunes in the Society for the Support of the Gospel, in the New York Sunday School Society and in more general missionary organizations. And like the Bethunes, they were rigidly orthodox Calvinists. John Stanford was an English Baptist far closer to seventeenth-century Calvinist theology than the revivalistic Baptists of the American frontier or the erudite Baptists of Massachusetts.[39] Ezra Stiles Ely, although later an ally of Charles Grandison Finney, represented at this point in his career the right wing of New York and Philadelphia orthodoxy. In 1811 Ely published Calvinism and Hopkinsianism Compared, a lengthy attack on Hopkinsianism, in which he pointedly accused both Gardiner Spring and his father, Samuel Spring, of heresy.[40]

Both Ely and Stanford adhered to a thoroughly orthodox view of human depravity and justification as a free gift of

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[39]For biographical information concerning John Stanford, see Sommers, Memoir of the Reverend John Stanford, and A. Everett Peterson, "John Stanford," Dictionary of American Biography, XVII, 500-501.

[40]Ezra Stiles Ely, The Contrast between Calvinism and Hopkinsianism (New Haven, 1811).

God. We must "put on Christ as a robe of righteousness and a garment of salvation," Stanford told a congregation in 1819.

> This we need, for all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags; these must be taken away and Christ, as the Lord our righteousness, put on for our personal justification and communion with God. . . . this righteousness alone constitutes the believer's standing at the throne of grace; and, possessed of this, he shall be acquitted on the day of judgement.[41]

Yet both these men led active missionary lives. Stanford, until well past seventy, served as chaplain to city and state institutions in New York City. Ezra Stiles Ely originally worked with Stanford as a missionary to the public institutions, had helped to found the Society for the Support of the Gospel among the Poor of New York, and later in his career actively supported city missions in New York and Philadelphia and Bible, tract and missionary societies.[42]

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[41]John Stanford, A Discourse on the Duty and Advantages of Improving Our Baptism (New York, 1819), pp. 4-5.

[42]The Presbyterian Historical Society, Philadelphia, possesses a bound volume of pamphlets and annual reports, all bearing Ezra Stiles Ely's signature. These illustrate concretely Ely's interest in and involvement with a broad spectrum of the Second Great Awakening's evangelical reforms. Bound with these missionary pamphlets are also the annual reports of some of the early nineteenth century's more temporal philanthropies. The reports of both groups date from 1818 and 1819, and thus show the general transition in the years following the War of 1812 from interest in secular charity to interest in religious philanthropy. The volume contains the annual reports of the following organizations: The American Bible Society, the New York Female Auxilliary Bible Society, the Bible Society of Philadelphia, the Young Men's Missionary Society of Richmond, Virginia, the Young Men's Missionary Society of

Although Stanford did not formally concur with his friend Isabella Graham's belief in unlimited atonement, he did explicitly espouse and preach the idea of sanctification--the life of benevolent activity that the saved Christian must take up following his conversion, throughout which he must strive to grow in grace. In 1819, he delivered a sermon entitled A Discourse on the Duty and Advantages of Improving our Baptism, in which he urged the newly baptized to do just that, to improve upon their baptism of justification by an active life of Christian benevolence. The Holy Spirit, Stanford asserted, in saving the individual, had reconstructed his will, reason and conscience. The new Christian had the explicit duty of utilizing his new nature, preaching to unbelievers and praying to God for their

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Philadelphia, the Female Domestic Missionary Society of Philadelphia, the Hampshire (England) Education Society, the Education Society of the Presbyterian Church of the United States, the Missionary Society of Philadelphia, Auxiliary to the Board of Missions of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of the United States, the United Foreign Missionary Society, the Philadelphia Sunday and Adult School Union, Auxiliary Bible Society for Stirlingshire and its Vicinity (England). Among the secular societies: the New York Institution for the Instruction of the Deaf and Dumb, and the Philadelphia Orphan Society. Bound in with these official publications were two zealous missionary sermons which urged the importance of human efficacy. John H. Rice, The Instrumentality of Man Employed in Propagating the Gospel: A Missionary Sermon (Richmond, Virginia, 1819), and Obadiah Jennings, A Missionary Sermon Preached in the First Presbyterian Church in Pittsburg, October 7, 1818, at the sitting of the Synod of Pittsburg, Constituting the Western Missionary Society (Steubenville, Pennsylvania, 1818). For a biographical sketch of Ely, see L. J. Halsey, "Great Preachers and Pastors," The North-Western Presbyterian, October 31, 1868.

conversion. Implicit in this sermon, as in Stanford's own life of missionary endeavors, was the belief that God willed to save most men, and that the saved Christian was responsible for helping save others.[43]

Such human actions, the Bethunes, Isabella Graham and John Stanford urged, followed justification, and were indeed central aspects of the saved Christian's life. But Ezra Stiles Ely had implied as early as 1810 that such acts of benevolence might actually form part of the sinner's attempt to win salvation, that human action might be a means not only to the salvation of others, but to the salvation of the individual himself. Flirting with the heresy of works, Ely urged New Yorkers to support the labor of missionaries in the city's public institutions not from the abstract motive of disinterested benevolence, but from fear that God might damn those who refused to act as His missionaries on earth. Ely reminded his wealthy hearers of the countless spiritual and temporal blessings granted them by God; He would severely judge those who ignored the religious needs of the poor. If He did not condemn them to eternal damnation, God would certainly grant them a lesser place in Heaven than those who had actively worked to spread His kingdom. "If they are to be found in heaven, you will find them among the least in the Kingdom; among the company of the scarcely saved. . . . They are the gill measures of

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[43]Stanford, A Discourse on the Duty and Advantages of Improving our Baptism, pp. 4-5, 7-8, 10.

heaven."[44] Isabella Graham and John Stanford had insisted that the saved had a duty to live active Christian lives. Ely implied that if they did not, they might not be among the elect. Seemingly the desire to justify an active and zealous life could make even orthodox Calvinists sound at times dangerously Arminian.

But why did Ely feel that missionary work held a place of such overriding importance in God's view of His creatures? Because, Ely stated emphatically, God could not save sinners unless New Yorkers acted as His missionary agents. Unless New Yorkers carried the Bible to unbelievers, preached and prayed with them, Ely asserted, they could not be saved.[45] But if New Yorkers did seek out sinners, he clearly implied, the sinner's salvation would follow. Almost a revivalistic urgency marks this particular sermon. Discussing unregenerated sinners in public institutions, Ely wrote:

> Alas! Alas! that so many have departed from the walls of that humane institution, to testify before God, that while their worm-eaten bodies have been objects of attention, their immortal souls have been wholly neglected! . . . Shall others ascend to the awful tribunal to cry, 'vengeance on the stupidity of worldly-minded, slumbering Christians?' Hark! they say 'we have perished in our iniquity; but our blood be upon their heads.'[46]

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[44]Ely, A Sermon for the Rich to Buy that they may Benefit Themselves and the Poor (New York, 1810), p. 18.

[45]Ibid., p. 11.

[46]Ibid., p. 23. Elsewhere in the same sermon Ely revealed a similar revivalistic urgency: "Believers, would

This differs little from the Female Missionary Society's assertion, some seven years later, that man's efforts were--somehow--an essential part of God's plan for the saving of souls. The Westminster Confession asserted that all men deserved damnation because of their debased natures. Yet in this sermon Ely attributes the sinner's damnation not simply to his own innate wickedness, nor to God's unknowable designs, but, in a real sense, to New Yorkers' unwillingness to act.

Thus, despite the formal adherence of these philanthropists to the cold Calvinism of New York or Pennsylvania's orthodox Presbyterianism, in practice, when it came to working with the poor, they shifted the emphasis of High Calvinism so as to hold out the possibility of salvation to all mankind and to insist that Christians actively seek converts among the poor of their own city. By the end of the second decade of the nineteenth century, almost all philanthropic New Yorkers seemed to accept the concept of human efficacy and a broad and sweeping atonement.

But Isabella Graham, the Bethunes, John Stanford and to an extent Ezra Stiles Ely represented an older generation. Their charities foreshadowed and prepared the way for city missions, but their theology was that of the age

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you live in Christ, die in him, and reign with him in glory? Let the Gospel, through your instrumentality be preached to the poor," p. 22.

which preceded the more radical revivalism and millennialism of the 1820's and 1830's. Men somewhat younger reflected this new style quite clearly and exhibited fewer of the discordances between formal thought and zealous action which marked this earlier generation.

From 1816 to 1853 another New Yorker closely associated with both the city mission movement and with the great revival events of the 1820's and 1830's kept a diary dedicated principally to his religious meditations and philanthropic activities.[47] This was Anson G. Phelps, an emigré from Connecticut and a leader of New York's commercial and financial community. Phelps's philanthropic interests touched almost every representative reform enthusiasm of the middle period. He was closely associated with the temperance movement, the peace movement and later the abolition crusade. He supported foreign and domestic missionary societies, was active quite early in the New York Religious Tract Society and the New York Sunday School Union, helped found the American Bible Society and the American Tract Society. He labored with Stanford for the souls of prison and almshouse inmates, and with his pastor, Gardiner Spring, was a manager of the New York Marine Bible Society, which sought to convert the city's sailors, and helped found the New York Evangelical Missionary Society of Young Men. From the 1820's on, Phelps

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[47]Anson G. Phelps, "Diary of Anson G. Phelps, 1806-07, 1816-1853," microfilm reproduction, New York Public Library, New York City.

was associated with New York's first permanent city mission, the New York City Tract Society.[48] From 1815 to almost 1830, Phelps, as a member of Brick Presbyterian Church, represented the New England Hopkinsian wing of New York presbyterianism; he was thus naturally sympathetic with Lyman Beecher's revivalistic Calvinism. In the late 1820's Phelps was converted by Charles Finney to his radical new measures, broke with Spring over Finney's doctrines and became one of the founders of evangelical Congregationalism in New York City.[49] Phelps's career thus forms a bridge between the secular and religious approach to charity and between the revival theology of the 1800's and that of the 1830's. Phelps's personal history demonstrates quite clearly the emotional commitments that first turned New Yorkers towards religious charity, and, in the succeeding years, the religious enthusiasm which led to the revivals of the 1820's and 1830's and the full-fledged city mission movement.

The God of Anson Phelps, like that of Isabella Graham and Divie Bethune, was a loving father whose joy lay in

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[48]Phelps may well have belonged to other organizations. Those I have mentioned are simply those whose annual reports list him as an officer or member or those organizations specifically mentioned in his diary. See, for example, his entries for December 8, 1816, December 22, 1816, March 16, 1817, May 18, 1817, May 24, 1825. For a sketch of Phelps's life, see Harold U. Faulkner, "Anson Greene Phelps," Dictionary of American Biography, XIV, 525-526.

[49]Shepherd Knapp, pp. 200, 522, 524; McLoughlin, Modern Revivalism, pp. 50ff.; Phelps, Diary, October 25, 1829, December 3, 1829, December 27-28, 1829.

saving sinful men. Frequently Phelps prayed to this God that he might save all in New York.[50]

And, as his religious and philanthropic career indicates, Phelps firmly believed that the individual Christian had an important role to play in effecting God's desire to save sinners. Indeed, the Christian owed God an active missionary life to compensate for his sinful existence before conversion. As Phelps wrote in 1817, "What a weight of responsibility rests upon me then after spending thirty-six years in a land of sin. . . . Everyday of my mortal life adds new obligations upon me to serve God. . . . What have I done to Help Build his glorious temple."[51] Seemingly God needed, or at least, expected Anson Phelps to aid Him in building this temple. To do so Phelps engaged in his multitude of religious reforms, Bible and tract societies, Sunday schools and foreign missions. God had souls to be saved everywhere. As an active member of the Society for Supporting the Gospel, Phelps regularly visited the almshouse and prisons, praying with the inmates and distributing Bibles and tracts. He taught Sunday school

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[50]Phelps, Diary, July 7, 1816, December 8, 1816, February 23, 1817, February 18, 1827.

[51]Ibid., March 23, 1817. The previous year Phelps, after observing the usual drunkenness and rioting common to the city on July 4th, had prayed God to help him save his fellow New Yorkers and bring them all to a knowledge of God's truth. July 7, 1816.

as well, praying that God would make him the agent in the conversion of at least one "poor little atheist."[52]

Fundamental to his commitment to unlimited atonement and human efficacy was Phelps's belief in the imminence of the millennium. Far more than our older New York philanthropists, Phelps expected a millennial era of perfection, and he expected it in his own lifetime. As early as 1817, he reflected in his diary upon the number of evangelical mission and reform societies founded in England and the United States and predicted that the millennium would shortly follow. "By the grace of God, this part of Missionary Labours, I firmly trust is one of the means the dear Redeemer is now making use of to Bring about the great work of Latter Day glory."[53] As the revival crescendo increased, so did Phelps's hope for the beginning of the millennium. He saw the 1827 revivals in New York City as a sign that the city would soon be transformed and part of his allegiance to Finney rested on his belief that Finney's revivals would lead directly to Christ's second coming.[54]

It was these convictions which led Phelps to help found New York's first permanent city mission in the mid-1820's. God, he believed, would save even the city's slum

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[52]Ibid., December 8, 1816. His entry for May 8, 1825, mentions distributing tracts when traveling to Monmouth, New Jersey. This, he added, was his practice whenever visiting away from New York.

[53]Ibid., February 23, 1817.

[54]Ibid., 1826 and 1827, passim.

dwellers--if only pious New Yorkers played an active role in these conversions. And upon these conversions, it must be remembered, rested not only the fate of individual souls, but the coming of the millennium.

In these beliefs Phelps was but representative of a growing number of evangelical New Yorkers, many of them originally New Englanders, whose Calvinism was colored not only with liberal Hopkinsianism but with the growing evangelical zeal of Charles Grandison Finney and the revivals of the 1820's. Throughout the 1820's and 1830's the zeal of these pious New Yorkers for the conversion of others rose--even for the conversion of the poor of their own city.

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The following pages are by no means an exhaustive bibliography of sources consulted in preparing this dissertation; the notes to particular chapters provide a more detailed guide to relevant material. I have chosen in this selective bibliography to do two things. First, I have tried to suggest those sources that have been most useful and influential in shaping my understanding of New York City and of American religion in the first half of the nineteenth century. Second, I have tried to present a brief description of the pertinent sources for each of the missions discussed in detail.

New York City

There is no good modern comprehensive history of nineteenth century New York; there is not really even a bad one. Nor is there a complete and adequate bibliography of New York City history. Harry J. Carmen and Arthur W. Thompson in their Guide to the Principal Sources for American Civilization, 1800-1900, in the City of New York (New York, 1962) discuss some of the material available for the social and religious history of New York City, but their compilation is by no means exhaustive and should be used

in conjunction with the bibliography and "Notes" in Isaac Newton Phelps Stokes, Iconography of Manhattan Island (6 vols.; New York, 1915-1928). Robert Ernst's Immigrant Life in New York City, 1825-1863 (New York, 1949), besides providing an invaluable study of New York's immigrants, contains an excellent bibliography not only for immigrant sources, but for New York's social history generally. In addition, see: "Checklist of Works Relating to the Social History of the City of New York--Its Clubs, Charities, Hospitals, etc., in the New York Public Library," Bulletin of the New York Public Library, V (June, 1901), 261-293. The card catalogue of the New York Public Library and the New York Historical Society provide in some ways still the most comprehensive guide to New York City history.

Public documents have provided an extremely useful source of information. I have found the following publications most useful: New York City Almshouse, Annual Reports of the Governors of the Almshouse, New York, for the Years 1850-1870 (New York, 1850-1870); New York City, City Inspector, Annual Reports, 1835-1870 (New York, 1835-1870); New York City, Common Council, Minutes of the Common Council, 1784-1831 (19 vols.; New York, 1917); David T. Valentine, Manual of the Corporation of the City of New York, 1842-1866 (New York, 1842-1866).

Investigations and other special reports of state and city agencies often provided useful information. Some of

the most illuminating were: New York State Assembly, Report of the Select Committee Appointed to Investigate Frauds upon Emigrant Passengers Arriving in this State, December 6, 1847, Assembly Document No. 46 (Albany, 1847); New York State Assembly, Report of the Select Committee Appointed to Examine into the Condition of Tenant Houses in New York and Brooklyn, March 9, 1857, Assembly Document No. 205 (Albany, 1857); New York State Senate, Report of the Select Committee Appointed to Investigate the Health Department of the City of New York, February 3, 1859, Senate Document No. 49 (Albany, 1859).

Much of New York's social history has of course to be sought in the personal documents--the diaries and letters--of contemporaries. There are many such published and unpublished writings by New Yorkers during the first half of the nineteenth century. I found three to be particularly revealing. One was the diary of Philip Hone in the Manuscript Division of the New York Historical Society. There are two published versions of this diary, neither of which is complete. These are: The Diary of Philip Hone, 1828-1851, ed. by Allan Nevins (New York, 1936), and The Diary of Philip Hone, 1828-1851, ed. by Bayard Tuckerman (2 vols.; New York, 1889). Of equal importance are the letters of John Pintard, chosen for publication from the Pintard manuscripts also at the New York Historical Society's Manuscript Division. John Pintard, Letters from John Pintard to His Daughter, Eliza Noel Pintard Davidson,

1816-1833, ed. by Dorothy C. Barck (4 vols.; New York, 1940). For an extremely revealing diary covering the later period of this dissertation, see: George Templeton Strong, The Diary of George Templeton Strong, ed. by Allan Nevins and Milton Halsey Thomas (4 vols.; New York, 1952).

There are, of course, scores of books and memoirs which shed light on the social history of nineteenth century New York City. The prints, maps, photographs, and charts printed in Stokes, Iconography, provide a basic source for the physical description of New York City. Another valuable source is the series of highly detailed street maps prepared by William Perris and his son beginning in the 1850's for use by the fire insurance companies of New York. William Perris, Maps of the City of New York. Surveyed under the Direction of the Insurance Companies of Said City (34 vols.; New York, 1852-1881). For an interesting insight into everyday life in New York, see Thomas Farrington DeVoe, The Market Book Containing a Historical Account of the Public Markets in the Cities of New York, Boston, Philadelphia and Brooklyn (New York, 1862). Only the volume on New York City was published. There are as well an abundance of guide books, city directories, and travel accounts describing New York during the first half of the nineteenth century. Stokes, Iconography, and Ernst, Immigrant Life, in their bibliographies provide useful

references. The New York Historical Society and the New York Public Library both have excellent collections of such accounts and descriptions.

While general histories of the city are disappointing, there are a number of useful studies of specific aspects of pre-bellum New York. For the commercial and mercantile development of the city, see Robert Greenhalgh Albion, The Rise of the Port of New York, 1815-1860 (New York, 1939). For interesting comments upon population growth, see suggestions made during a recent conference by Everett S. Lee and Michael Lalli, "Population," in The Growth of the Seaport Cities, 1790-1825, ed. by David T. Gilchrist (Charlottesville, Va., 1967), pp. 25-37. Still valuable is Adna Ferrin Weber's The Growth of Cities in the Nineteenth Century (New York, 1897). Sidney Pomerantz discusses the early history of the city in his detailed study: New York: An American City, 1783-1803. A Study of Urban Life (New York, 1938). Douglas T. Miller's recent study of social class in Jacksonian New York City is, however, somewhat disappointing; Jacksonian Aristocracy. Class and Democracy in New York, 1830-1860 (New York, 1967).

For a discussion of social problems, especially of immigration and of slums, see, in addition to Ernst's Immigrant Life: Robert W. DeForest and Lawrence Veiller, eds., The Tenement House Problem Including the Report of the New York State Tenement House Commission of 1900 (2 vols.; New York, 1903), and David M. Schneider, The History

of Public Welfare in New York State (2 vols.; Chicago, 1938). The notes in Gert H. Brieger, "Sanitary Reform in New York City: Stephen Smith and the Passage of the Metropolitan Health Bill," Bulletin of the History of Medicine, XL (1966), 407-429, provide an excellent guide to relevant medical and public health literature. Appeals for the reform of public health conditions often provide social analysis and criticism as well as extremely graphic descriptive material. See, for example: John H. Griscom, A History, Chronological and Circumstantial, of the Visitation of Yellow Fever at New York (New York, 1858), Griscom, The Sanitary Condition of the Laboring Population of New York with Suggestions for its Improvement (New York, 1845), and The Citizens Association of New York, Report of the Council of Hygiene and Public Health of the Citizen's Association of New York upon the Sanitary Condition of the City (New York, 1865).

Religion

The historian of American religion has two valuable bibliographical tools with which to lighten his labors. For all sources up until 1961, Nelson R. Burr's excellent bibliography covers in detail almost every aspect of American religion: A Critical Bibliography of Religion in America, Vol. IV of Religion in American Life, ed. by James Ward Smith and A. Leland Jamison (4 vols.; Princeton, 1961). Church History publishes extensive book reviews and summaries

of doctoral dissertations in the field of church history, which, in conjunction with Burr, provides a relatively complete and current bibliography of American religion. The American Quarterly's annual bibliography of books and articles in the field contains a section for American religion. In addition, Gaylord Albaugh recently published an extremely useful guide to Presbyterian newspapers and magazines, "American Presbyterian Periodicals and Newspapers 1752-1830, with Library Locations," which appeared in four installments in the Presbyterian Historical Society Quarterly beginning in September, 1963. William Buell Sprague, Annals of the American Pulpit; or, Commemorative Notices of Distinguished American Clergymen of Various Denominations from the Early Settlement of the Country to the Close of the Year Eighteen Hundred and Fifty-Five (9 vols.; New York, 1857-1869), records an impressive number of biographical sketches and reminiscences of prominent American clergymen. Its inclusiveness made Sprague's Annals particularly useful for this dissertation. The volumes are organized by denomination and thoroughly indexed.

Secondary studies of American religious thought, 1775-1860, which have been of particular use to me include Sidney Mead's excellent intellectual biography of Nathaniel William Taylor, 1786-1858: A Connecticut Liberal (Chicago, 1942), William McLoughlin's insightful study of Charles Finney in Modern Revivalism. Charles Grandison Finney to

Billy Graham (New York, 1959), and his "Introduction" to Charles Grandison Finney's Lectures on Revivals of Religion, ed. by William G. McLoughlin (Cambridge, Mass., 1960). McLoughlin not only discusses Finney but comments perceptively upon developments in American theology during the 1820's and 1830's. H. Shelton Smith's Changing Conceptions of Original Sin. A Study in American Theology since 1750 (New York, 1955) provides a useful perspective in which to place some of the theological developments of these enthusiastic years. Still essential is Joseph Haroutunian's Piety Versus Moralism. The Passing of the New England Theology (New York, 1932). Barbara Cross in her introduction to the new edition of The Autobiography of Lyman Beecher, ed. by Barbara Cross (2 vols.; Cambridge, Mass., 1961), and in her biography of Horace Bushnell, Horace Bushnell, Minister to a Changing America (Chicago, 1958), has given us two very suggestive studies of the significantly contrasting theology and lives of two of the leading Protestant theologians of the first half of the nineteenth century. Whitney Cross, in his now classic Burnt-Over District. The Social and Intellectual History of Enthusiastic Religion in Western New York, 1800-1850 (Ithaca, New York, 1950), has studied in depth the social aspects of revivalistic religion in one geographic area and at one comparatively limited period in time. William Russell Hoyt's recent doctoral dissertation on Gardiner Spring, a central figure in the early development of New York's city missions,

has been most helpful: "The Religious Thought of Gardiner Spring with Particular Reference to his Doctrine of Sin and Salvation" (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Duke University, 1962). William Speer's highly pietistic account of the Great Revival of 1800 (Philadelphia, 1872) provides much valuable information about a seldom studied though quite important phase of the Second Great Awakening. E. H. Gillett in his History of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America (2 vols.; Philadelphia, 1864) includes details not otherwise available concerning individual ministers and specific churches.

There are a number of studies of English evangelism during the early years of the nineteenth century, especially of the Clapham Set. I found the most comprehensive and detailed to be that by Ford K. Brown, Fathers of the Victorians. The Age of Wilberforce (Cambridge, England, 1961). The standard sources for the study of Thomas Chalmers are the biography by his son-in-law, William Hanna, Memoirs of the Life and Writings of Thomas Chalmers (3 vols.; Edinburgh, 1852), and Thomas Chalmers, The Works of Thomas Chalmers (25 vols.; Glasgow, 1836-1849). For Chalmers' writings specifically concerning the distribution and purpose of charity, see excerpts of his major writings in Chalmers on Charity: A Selection of Passages and Scenes to Illustrate the Social Teachings and Practical Work of Thomas Chalmers, arranged and ed. by N. Masterman (Westminster, 1900).

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I have found the following studies describing the social dimensions of American Protestantism useful: Aaron Abel, Urban Impact on American Protestantism, 1865-1900 (Cambridge, Mass., 1943); Ray Allen Billington, The Protestant Crusade, 1800-1860: A Study of the Origins of American Nativism (New York, 1938); John Bodo, Protestant Clergy and Social Issues, 1812-1848 (Princeton, 1954); Clifford E. Griffin, Their Brothers' Keepers. Moral Stewardship in the United States, 1800-1865 (New Brunswick, New Jersey, 1960); Charles C. Cole, Jr., The Social Ideas of Northern Evangelists, 1826-1860 (New York, 1954); Charles I. Foster, Errand of Mercy. The Evangelical United Front, 1790-1837 (Chapel Hill, North Carolina, 1960); Timothy L. Smith, Revivalism and Social Reform in Mid-Nineteenth Century America (New York, 1957).

The amount of sermon and biographical material shedding light on the theological and social aspects of American Protestantism during this period is overwhelming. A few of the representative and influential primary sources which have been most useful to me are: Charles Grandison Finney, Memoirs of Charles Grandison Finney Written by Himself (New York, 1876); Gardiner Spring, Personal Reminiscences of the Life and Times of Gardiner Spring, Pastor of the Brick Presbyterian Church in the City of New York (2 vols.; New York, 1866) (Spring includes significant information concerning the early evangelical movement as well as his own opinions of such controversial religious leaders

as Lyman Beecher and Finney). Joanna Graham Bethune's The Power of Faith: Exemplified in the Life and Writings of the Late Mrs. Isabella Graham of New York (New York, 1816) not only sheds light on conservative Calvinist thought at the turn of the nineteenth century, but contains information about many of the local charities with which Mrs. Graham was connected (in particular the Society for the Relief of Poor Widows with Small Children). Samuel Hanson Cox in his Interviews: Memorable and Useful from Diary and Memory Reproduced (New York, 1853) describes conversations with some of the leading religious figures of the first half of the nineteenth century--including Thomas Chalmers. An early New York evangelical, Cox was closely associated with several pioneer city missions. For a history of American Protestantism written by a minister who was a leader of the city mission movement, see Samuel B. Halliday and Gregory Daniel Seely, The Church in America and Its Baptisms of Fire. Being an Account of the Progress of Religion in America in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries, as seen in the Great Revivals in the Christian Church, and in the Growth and Work of Various Religious Bodies (New York, 1896). John S. Stone's pious Memoir of the Life of James Milnor, D.D. Late Rector of St. George's Church, New York (New York, 1849), consisting basically of excerpts from Milnor's diary, is a valuable source for a study of the "Low-Church" faction among New York Episcopalians. The New York Public Library has a microfilm copy

of Anson G. Phelps' manuscript Diary, 1806-1807, 1816-1853, which is valuable for any study of religion and philanthropy during the first half of the nineteenth century. Biographies of other religious and philanthropic leaders connected with particular missions will be cited in the section describing sources for that particular institution.

The sermon and pamphlet literature related to the evangelical mission movement are sometimes difficult to locate. The libraries of Union Theological Seminary, New York Public Library, New York Historical Society, Presbyterian Historical Society, and for Episcopal material, General Theological Seminary in New York all possess excellent collections of such materials.

Church histories contain much interesting material for both social and theological history. Some of the most useful in preparing this dissertation include: Morgan Dix, A History of the Parish of Trinity Church in the City of New York; compiled by order of the Corporation, and edited by Morgan Dix (4 vols.; New York, 1898-1906); Shepherd Knapp, A History of the Brick Presbyterian Church in the City of New York (New York, 1909), which contains valuable institutional history as well as a useful biographical sketch of Gardiner Spring; William Rhinelander Stewart, Grace Church and Old New York (New York, 1924); two studies of the Broadway Tabernacle and the origins of the Congregational Church in New York City, Susan Hayes Ward, The History of the Broadway Tabernacle Church from its Organization

in 1840 to the close of 1900 Including Factors Influencing its Formation (New York, 1901), and L. Nelson Nichols, History of the Broadway Tabernacle of New York City (New Haven, 1940); Henry Anstice, History of St. George's Church in the City of New York. 1752-1811-1911 (New York, 1911), which is a good source to the early history of the Episcopal Church in New York City, especially of the "Low-Church" faction; and finally, John P. Peters, Annals of St. Michaels, Being the History of St. Michael's Protestant Episcopal Church, New York, for One Hundred Years, 1807-1907, Compiled by Order of the Vestry (New York, 1907), which is invaluable to a study of nineteenth century Episcopal philanthropy.

Early New York Secular and Religious Charities

Beginning with the years immediately following the Revolution, New Yorkers founded a number of long-lived charities. Lists of these early charities can be found in any early guide book. Biographies exist for a number of New Yorkers most active in these charities. These include: John H. Griscom, Memoir of John Griscom, with an Account of the New York High School, Society for the Prevention of Pauperism and Other Institutions Compiled from an Autobiography and Other Sources (New York, 1859). This memoir is a valuable survey of early New York philanthropy. It is interestingly supplemented by John Griscom's own diary of his travels: A Year in Europe Comprising a Journal of

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Conversations in England, Scotland, Ireland, France, Switzerland, the North of Italy, and Holland in 1818-1819 (2 vols.; New York, 1823). Samuel L. Knapp's Life of Thomas Eddy, Comprising an Extensive Correspondence with Many of the Most Distinguished Philosophers and Philanthropists of this and Other Countries (New York, 1834) consists essentially of excerpts from Eddy's diary and correspondence. It describes in detail the philanthropic career of an actively benevolent Quaker from the 1780's into the 1820's. Charles G. Sommers presents a very useful study of one of the most active of New York's early philanthropists in his Memoir of the Rev. John Stanford, D.D. Late Chaplain to the Humane and Criminal Institutions in the City of New York (New York, 1835). Sommers relies heavily upon Stanford's diary, which is deposited in the Manuscript Division of the New York Historical Society. Charles H. Hunt in his opening chapters of The Life of Edward Livingston (New York, 1864) discusses the ideas and actions of this highly imaginative and socially conscious New York mayor.

A number of studies of the early charities exist. See, for example: Charles C. Andrews, The History of the New York African Free Schools from their Establishment in 1787 to the Present Time (New York, 1830); William Oland Bourne, A History of the Public School Society of the City of New York (New York, 1870); B. K. Pierce, A Half Century with Juvenile Delinquents; or, The New York House of Refuge

and Its Times (New York, 1869); Edwin W. Rice, The Sunday School Movement 1780 to 1917 and the Sunday School Union 1817 to 1917 (Philadelphia, 1917).

In this dissertation I have discussed several of the more representative and influential of the early city charities. Appended below is a partial list of sources useful in gaining an impression of the scope of New Yorkers' charitable work in the closing years of the eighteenth and early years of the nineteenth centuries.

The Society for the Prevention of Pauperism in the City of New York. Annual Reports I-VI (1818-1823). New York, 1818-1823.

_____. Report of a Committee on the Subject of Pauperism. New York, 1818.

_____. Documents Relating to Savings Banks, Intemperance, and Lotteries. New York, 1819.

_____. Report of a Committee Appointed by the Society on the Expediency of Erecting an Institution for the Reformation of Juvenile Delinquents. New York, 1823.

The Society for the Relief of Poor Widows with Small Children. Constitution of the Ladies' Society, Established in New-York, for the Relief of Poor Widows with Small Children. New York, 1799.

_____. An Act to Incorporate the Society for the Relief of Poor Widows with Small Children, Passed April 2, 1802. New York, 1802.

_____. The By-Laws and Regulations to which Is Added a List of the Subscribers and of the Donations Made to the Society from November 1809 to 1811. New York, 1811.

_____. The By-Laws and Regulations to which Is Added a List of the Subscribers and of the Donations Made to the Society from November 1811-November 1813. New York, 1813.

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_____. The By-laws and Regulations to which Is Added a List of the Subscribers and of the Donations Made to the Society from November 1813 to November 1816. New York, 1816.

_____. Society for the Relief of Poor Widows with Small Children, 1797-1922. New York, 1922.

Bethune includes several early annual reports of the Society in her edition of Graham's Power of Faith. John Stanford in his Sketch of the Active Life of Mrs. Sarah Hoffman (Philadelphia, 1822) includes much interesting information concerning this founder of the Society and the Society itself.

The Society for Supporting the Gospel Among the Poor of the City of New-York. Annual Reports II-IV (1815-1817). New York, 1815-1817.

Ely, Ezra Stiles. Visits of Mercy, or the Journals of the Rev. Ezra Stiles Ely, D.D., Written while He Was Stated Preacher to the Hospital and Alms-House, in the City of New York. Philadelphia, 1829. This is Ely's diary for the two years he served as the Society's first missionary. John Stanford was his successor.

Stanford, John. Annual Report for the Year 1825, to the Honourable the Mayor and Common Council of the City of New-York on the Subject of Religious Services Performed at the Alms-house, the Penitentiary, Debtor's Prison, and the Bridewell, in Common Council, January 30, 1826. New York, 1826. Stanford was the missionary of the Society; part of his salary was paid by the Common Council.

See as well Sommers' Memoir of Stanford and Stanford's manuscript Diary.

The Young Men's Missionary Society of New York. Third Annual Report for the Year 1818. New York, 1818.

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New York Evangelical Missionary Society of Young Men. Proceedings of the First Anniversary together with the Annual Report of the Board of Directors. New York, 1817.

_____. The Second Annual Report of the Directors at Their Annual Meeting on Wednesday the 6th of December, 1818. New York, 1818.

_____. [Gardiner Spring]. A Brief View of the Facts which Gave Rise to the New-York Evangelical Society of Young Men. Together with their Constitution. New York, 1817.

Gardiner Spring's Personal Reminiscences contain much material relevant to this Society.

New York Female Missionary Society for the Poor of the City of New-York and Its Vicinity. Report of the Directors, Read Before the Society at Their First Annual Meeting, May 12, 1817. New York, 1817.

_____. Annual Reports II and V (1818, 1821). New York, 1818, 1821.

Perrine, Matthew LaRue. Women Have a Work to Do in the House of God: A Discourse Delivered at the First Annual Meeting of the Female Missionary Society for the Poor of the City of New-York and Its Vicinity. May 12, 1817. New York, 1817.

Stafford, Ward. New Missionary Field, A Report to the Female Missionary Society for the Poor of the City of New-York and Its Vicinity, at their Quarterly Prayer Meeting, March 1817. New York, 1817.

Spring, Gardiner. The Excellence and Influence of the Female Character. A Sermon Preached for the Female Missionary Society for the Poor of the City of New-York and its Vicinity, 1825. New York, 1825.

The New York Public Library, the New York Historical Society, the Historical Society of Pennsylvania, and the Presbyterian Historical Society all have excellent pamphlet collections which include the annual reports of a number of shorter-lived urban philanthropies.

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City Missions

The following pages include the principal sources used for the missions discussed at length in this dissertation.

New York City Mission and Tract Society

The New York Religious Tract Society. Annual Reports I-X (1812-1822). New York, 1812-1822. (The first two annual reports exist only in manuscript in the Society Archives, 105 East 22nd Street, New York, New York.)

Female Branch of the New York Religious Tract Society. "Constitution and Minutes, March 18, 1822-February 12, 1827." Society Archives.

New York City Tract Society. Annual Reports I-XLIV (1828-1870). New York, 1828-1870. (The annual reports of the Female Branch of the New York City Tract Society are bound in with the City Tract Society's annual reports.)

_____. "Minutes of the Meetings of the Board of Managers. April, 1860, 1861, 1862, 1863, 1864, 1865." Society Archives.

_____. "Minutes of the Meetings of the Board of Directors, January, 1866-1890." Society Archives.

_____. "Minute Book of the Executive Committee. No. 1-3, January, 1866-June, 1872." Society Archives.

Female Tract Society, Auxiliary to the American Tract Society. "Minutes of Meetings, 1827-1828." Society Archives.

Female Branch of the New York City Tract Society. "Minutes, 1831-1847." Society Archives.

New York City Mission and Tract Society. City Mission Chapels. New York, n.d. Society Archives.

_____. Walks about New York. Facts and Figures Gathered from Various Sources by the Secretary of the City Mission. New York, 1865.

Miller, Kenneth D., and Miller, Ethel Prince. The People Are the City. 150 Years of Social and Religious Concern in New York City. New York, 1962.

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American Female Guardian Society

The American Female Guardian Society underwent a complex series of institutional metamorphoses. It was founded in 1830 as the New York Magdalen Society. When this Society disbanded in 1832, a faction regrouped as the New York Female Benevolent Society. In 1834 schism divided this group, and a third organization was founded by the supporters of John McDowall. This was the New York Female Moral Reform Society, which in 1839 became the American Female Moral Reform Society, and finally in 1848 the American Female Guardian Society.

The three principal sources for the Society's history are: the American Female Guardian Society's Annual Reports I-XXXVI (1834-1870) (New York, 1834-1870); the Society's newspaper, which went through several changes of title (The Advocate of Moral Reform, 1834-1846; Advocate of Moral Reform and Family Guardian, 1846-1854, and after 1854, Advocate and Family Guardian); and the American Female Guardian Society's "Executive Committee Minutes, November, 1846-November, 1854," Society Archives, Woodycrest Avenue, Bronx, New York.

For the origins of the Society, see:

McDowall's Journal I-II (January, 1833-December, 1834).

McDowall, John B. Magdalen Report. Reprinted McDowall's Journal, II (May, 1834), 33-38.

_____. Magdalen Facts. New York, 1832.

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New York Protestant Episcopal City Mission Society

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The Episcopal Church has been fortunate in the amount of historical attention paid it. There are a number of institutional and general histories and biographies which have proved useful in my work. Among the most helpful were:

Brewer, Clifton Hartwell. Early Episcopal Sunday Schools 1814-1865. Milwaukee, 1933.

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Peters, Annals of St. Michaels (see above), is a highly useful source.

Five Points House of Industry.

The principal sources for a history of the Five Points House of Industry are:

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_____. The New Charitable Monthly or "What is Done for the Poor," I-II (1854-1855).

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_____. Monthly Record of the Five Points House of Industry, I-XIII (1857-1870).

_____. "Superintendent's Reports June 19, 1867-January 25, 1868." Society Archives. Happy Valley School, Pomona, New York.

_____. "Admissions Record, 1857-1870." Society Archives. (These consist of a brief history of each person admitted to the House.)

Barnard, William F. Forty Years at the Five Points. New York, 1893.

For a modern discussion of the Five Points House, see Isaac James Quillen, "A History of the Five Points, New York City" (unpublished Master's thesis, Yale University, 1932). Miriam Z. Langsam in Children West. A History of the

Placing-Out System of the New York Children's Aid Society, 1853-1890 (Madison, Wisconsin, 1964) gives some background for Pease's work with children. See, also, Charles Loring Brace, The Dangerous Classes of New York, and Twenty Years Among Them (New York, 1872).

Material for the origins of the Five Points House in the New York Ladies Home Missionary Society and the history of the Five Points Mission can be found in the New York Ladies Home Missionary Society's history of their own work, The Old Brewery and the New Mission House at the Five Points (New York, 1854), and in articles and editorials in the Methodist weekly, The Christian Advocate, 1853-1855. There is still a Five Points Mission in New York City, but I was unable to gain permission to examine their records, if any still exist.

New York Association for Improving the Condition of the Poor

The three principal sources for the Association's history are its Annual Reports, 1845-1870, "The Minutes of the Board of Managers, 1850-1876," which are in the archives of the Community Service Society, 105 East 22nd Street, New York, New York, and the memoir of Robert Hartley by his son, which includes lengthy excerpts from Hartley's diary and from Hartley's private papers: Isaac Smithson Hartley, Memorial of Robert Milham Hartley. Edited by his Son (Utica, New York, 1882).

The archives of the Community Service Society contain a number of letters and reports from Hartley to the Association visitors concerning the distribution of charity and other practical matters. The Association's archives also have some of the visitors' replies to Hartley's letters.

The A.I.C.P. also printed and selectively distributed a number of reports on housing and medical care for the poor. Among the most significant are: New York Association for Improving the Condition of the Poor, First Report of a Committee on the Sanitary Condition of the Poor in the City of New York (New York, 1853), and A Plan for the Better Distribution of Medical Attendance and Medicines for the Indigent Sick, by the Public Dispensaries in the City of New York (New York, 1845).

The Association also published and distributed tracts instructing the poor on household management and habits of self-reliance and frugality. These included: The Economist; or Plain Directions about Food and Drink with the Best Modes of Preparation (n.p., n.d.); Street-Begging and Vagrancy (n.p., n.d.); and The Mistake (New York, 1850).

Several modern studies of the Association exist: Dorothy G. Becker, "The Visitor to the New York City Poor, 1843-1876," Social Service Review, XXXV (December, 1961), 382-396; Lillian Brandt, Growth and Development of the Association for Improving the Condition of the Poor and the Charity Organization Society (A Preliminary and Exploratory Review) (New York, 1942); The Community Service Society,

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Frontiers of Human Welfare, The Story of a Hundred Years of Service to the Community of New York, 1848-1948 (New York, 1948).